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AND  
LITERARY MEMORIALS  
OF  
*Presbyterianism in Ireland*

SECOND SERIES



BY  
THOMAS WITHEROW

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HISTORICAL  
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OF  
Presbyterianism in Ireland.

(1731—1800.)

SECOND SERIES.

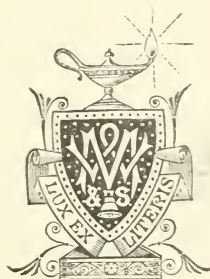
✓  
By THOMAS WITHEROW,

PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY IN MAGEE COLLEGE, LONDONDERRY.

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."—HEB. xiii. 7, 8.

"Et quidem bonos viros in hac terra fuisse non dubito, signa tamen atque virtutes aut ab eis nequaquam facta existimo, aut ita sunt hactenus silentio suppressa, ut utrumne sint facta nesciamus."—

GREGORII DIALOGI, lib. i.



WILLIAM MULLAN AND SON,  
LONDON AND BELFAST  
1880.





## *P R E F A C E.*

---

IN the present volume the reader will notice some deviation from the original plan. That plan was to give a distinct chapter to each writer, without regard to the importance of the work which he published, or to the position which he filled. This was found on experience to be attended with some practical disadvantage. But in the present volume, to each of the more prominent writers only a separate chapter is given, while all the others are grouped together in a single chapter at the end. By this means space is economised, and a longer period of time is comprehended in the volume.

In the years 1731-1800, over which this volume extends, no author of the Synod of Ulster, the Secession Synod, or the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, and no works of such an author, so far as known, have been passed over without some notice; though the notice given to many of them is briefer and more meagre than we could have wished. If any such name or any

such work has been omitted, it is because up till the present their existence has escaped our knowledge. On the other hand, two or three Southern ministers have been designedly left out, because their opinions on religious matters were so far outside the circle of orthodoxy, and they themselves but remotely connected with that form of church life which it was our main design to illustrate.

Since the sheets passed through the press, a friend very kindly sent us a volume containing some writings of the Rev. John Rogers of Cahans, which we had not previously seen, and which enables us to give a more complete list of his works than is supplied at page 247. Had we been in possession of this volume at an earlier date, the name of Mr. Rogers, according to our plan of arrangement, would have come in at an earlier part of the volume, immediately after Chapter lxxii. The correct list is as follows:—

1. A *Sermon* preached October 24, 1770, at Newbliss, at the Ordination of the Rev. Samuel Rutherford. [1 Tim. iv. 12.] 12mo, pp. 32 (unfinished). *Monaghan*, 1770. M. C. D.
2. *Sermon* preached at Lisnavein, otherwise Ballybay New Erection, on Saturday, June 10, 1780, to the Lisnavein Independent Rangers, Trough Volunteers, Lisluney Volunteers, and Monaghan Rangers. [2 Sam. x. 12.] 12mo, pp. 42. *Edinburgh*, 1780. M. C. D.
3. A Letter to a Friend; or, An *Historical Dialogue* between Euister, a Minister of the Established Church, Misogenos, a Popish Priest, Bibliophilos, a Presbyterian Minister, and

Zelotes, a Mountain Minister ; which contains some remarks on the nature of Popery, and evinces that the best Christians are the best subjects : that the political principles of the Mountain Men were never adopted by any body of men before the Revolution, and that there were witnesses for the Protestant principles in the darkest times of Popery. Also some account of Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, &c., and of the rise of the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, and England ; and also the loyalty of Presbyterians since the Reformation. Collected chiefly from the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, Stackhouse, Newton, Robertson, the Universal History, Rapin, Clarendon, &c. 12mo, pp. 64. Dublin, 1781. M. C. D.

4. *Dialogues between Students, &c.* 1787.
5. *The Substance of a Speech, &c.* 1809.

The full titles of Nos. 4 and 5 are given at p. 247.

We hope it may be found on examination that omissions of this kind, and inaccuracies, though not entirely absent, do not often occur in the two volumes now submitted to the public.

MAGEE COLLEGE, LONDONDERRY,  
24th December, 1879.





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## CHAPTER LI.

WILLIAM BOYD, M.A. (1710—1772),

MINISTER OF MACOSQUIN AND MONREAGH.

1. *A Good Conscience* a necessary qualification of a Gospel Minister. A Sermon preached at Antrim, June 15th, 1731, at a General Synod of the Protestants of the Presbyterian persuasion in the North of Ireland. [Heb. xiii. 18.] 18mo, pp. 30. Derry, 1731. W. D. K.

THE Presbytery of Coleraine ordained Mr. WILLIAM BOYD as minister of Macosquin on the 31st of January, 1710.

At the time of his settlement in that part of the County Derry, the poverty of the country was so great that many ministers and people were seriously thinking of emigration to the American colonies on an extensive scale. In 1718 Mr. Boyd was sent over to New England, bearing a commission signed by nine ministers and by 208 other persons, authorising him to ascertain what encouragement would be given them by the Colonial Government in case of their going to settle in that country. The original document still exists in America, and has been printed in Parker's *History of Londonderry, N.H.*, from which we transfer it to these pages, under the belief that in this country it has never been printed before, and that it is therefore quite new to the majority of our readers. The names appended thereto many will recognise as the names borne at the present time by the old Presbyterian families of Aghadowey, Macosquin, Coleraine, Ballymoney, and the valley of

the Lower Bann. The answer given to the application is not now known ; but it is certain that, whether from an improved state of affairs at home, or from a less encouraging response than was expected, some who signed the commission did not emigrate. Mr. M'Gregor, minister of Aghadowey (1701-1718), whose name is not at the document, went out the same year that his neighbour, Mr. Boyd, was sent to negotiate ; the probability being that he and those of his people who accompanied him emigrated at their own risk, without waiting for the result of Mr. Boyd's embassy. Mr. M'Gregor preached to his people before leaving on the words of Moses, " If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence " (Ex. xxxiii. 15), and stated in the course of his sermon that their reasons for departure were—*first*, to avoid oppression and cruel bondage ; *second*, to shun persecution and designed ruin ; *third*, to withdraw from the communion of idolaters ; and, *lastly*, to have freedom of worship. He and his people founded a city in New Hampshire, and called it *Londonderry*, after the county which they had left, and the city, in whose sufferings and deliverance many of them had a share. It was this town, which some years after gave shelter to Matthew Clerk (see ch. xxxiii.).

But to return to our subject. In 1725 Mr. Boyd left Macosquin, and accepted a call to Monreagh, near Derry, then vacant owing to the removal of the Rev. William Gray to Usher's Quay, Dublin. He was installed in this ancient congregation, formerly known as Taboyn, but in later times Monreagh, on the 25th of April in the above year. He had been scarcely two years settled in his new charge till Mr. Gray, feeling uncomfortable in the metropolis, without asking the consent of Presbytery or people, suddenly made a descent on Taboyn, and began to preach in an old corn-kiln at St. Johnston, within the bounds of his former congregation. Mr. Boyd in consequence found himself at once involved in trouble. Persons, from considerations of self, everywhere are tempted to do unprincipled things, careless as to what interests are damaged.

Members of Monreagh congregation, many of whom had made themselves morally accountable for a portion of Mr. Boyd's salary, were induced, some from convenience, and some out of personal regard to Mr. Gray, to connect themselves with the new congregation at St. Johnston. Criminations and recriminations before the Church courts followed. The Synod acted as arbiter between the parties, was lavish of good advice, refused for several years to recognise either Mr. Gray or St. Johnston, and in reference to the character of Mr. Boyd, on which some tried to cast dust, it declared that it "stands clear and unexceptionable, and that his doctrine and conversation have been suitable to his station and office as a minister of the Gospel." Notwithstanding all that the Synod did to protect him, Gray's unworthy conduct damaged his income. The congregation, which in 1674 had paid Mr. Hart sixty pounds, a salary not inferior then to that paid by any congregation in the Meeting of Laggan, promised Mr. Boyd fifty pounds at his settlement; but this was so much reduced, that in 1732 he declared himself willing to accept forty pounds if well secured.

To mark the esteem in which he was held by his brethren, Mr. Boyd was chosen Moderator of the Synod of Ulster at its meeting in Dungannon in 1730. Next year, when retiring from office, he preached at Antrim a discourse, the title of which stands at the head of this notice. It is an excellent and orthodox address, having special reference to Abernethy's sermon on *Personal Persuasion*, which he quotes several times. It is simply an echo of the great Non-subscription Controversy, the noise of which had now passed by. His doctrine is that to have a good conscience in all things is the bright character of a Gospel minister, and is what entitles him to the respect due to his office. In handling his subject he shows what conscience is, what it is to have a good conscience, and what it is to have a good conscience in all things. He then illustrates the truth of his general proposition, and concludes with a particular application.

Mr. Boyd lived to be a very old man. He died on the 2d of May, 1772.\*

---

#### CONSCIENCE.

I am to inquire what conscience is ; and I think it may be described to be a man's own judgment concerning his actions, as they are agreeable or disagreeable to the Divine law ; for conscience sets up a court of judicature in a man's own breast, and sustains every part necessary in this trial. As a lawgiver it discovers the rule by which our actions are to be regulated, namely, the law of God. As a witness, it declares what our actions have been ; and truly a man's conscience is to him instead of a thousand witnesses ; and as a judge it acquits or condemns, as they have been agreeable or disagreeable to this rule, and pronounces rewards or punishments accordingly, so that sometimes ravishing joy springs up in the soul or guilty fears are awakened, though men's actions are secret, and not liable to the cognisance of man.

And yet still we are to remember that conscience is only God's viceroy and deputy in the soul, and in the whole of its actions accountable to Him, whether as delivering the law, witnessing as to our actions, or pronouncing sentence concerning them. And this the very grammatical construction of the word does sufficiently intimate, not only in our translation, but also in the Latin *conscientia*, and even in the original *συνείδησις*, which signifies *knowledge with another*, namely, God. Conscience is not the supreme lawgiver, the unerring witness, the infallible judge ; it always bears respect unto God. The language, therefore, of conscience is to this purpose : God has forbidden, God sees, and God will punish ; and if it had not a respect unto God, which way could it put men upon the rack for their most secret sins, which no eye ever saw nor heart ever knew but their own ? It is a just and a holy God, who has power to save and to destroy, whom conscience reveres ; it is His law it proclaims, for Him it witnesseth, and in His name it passeth sentence. And it is the secret influence of the Supreme Being that makes its sentences comfortable or terrible to us ; for, as far as it acts right, its sentence is the sentence of God Himself ; though it is true, if it acts wrong, there lies an appeal from this false judgment in the court of conscience to our Supreme Lord, to be judged by Him according to His law.—*Sermon*, pp. 5, 6.

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod* : Boyd's *Sermon on Conscience* : Parker's *History of Londonderry*.



## MR. BOYD'S COMMISSION TO AMERICA.

*To His Excellency the Right Honourable Collonel SAMUEL SUITTE, Governour of New England.*

We, whose names are underwritten, Inhabitants of ye North of Ireland, Doe in our own names, and in the Names of many others our Neighbours, Gentlemen, Ministers, Farmers, and Tradesmen, commissionate and appoint our trusty and well-beloved Friend, the Reverend Mr. William Boyd of Macasky to His Excellency the Right Honourable Collonel Samuel Suitte, Governour of New England, and to assure His Excellency of our sincere and hearty inclination to transport ourselves to that very excellent and renowned Plantation, upon our obtaining from His Excellency suitable encouragement. And further to act and doe in our names as his prudence shall direct. Given under our hands this 26th day of March, Anno Dom. 1718.

JAMES TEATTE, V.D.M.

[Killeshandra].

THOMAS COBHAM, V.D.M.

[Clough].

ROBERT HOUSTON, V.D.M.

WILLIAM LEECH, V.D.M.

[Ballymena].

ROBERT HIGINBOTHAM,

V.D.M. [Coleraine].

JOHN PORTER, V.D.M.

HEN. NEILLE, V.D.M.

[Ballyrashane].

THOS. ELDER, V.D.M.

JAMES THOMSON, V.D.M.

[Ballywillan].

WILLIAM KER.

WILL. M'ALBEN.

JAHON ANDRSON.

GEORGE GREGE.

ANDREW DEAN.

ALEXANDER DUNLOP, M.A.

ARCH. M. COOK, M.A.

Alexr. Blair.

B. Cochran.

William Galt.

Peter Thompson.

Richard M'Laughlin.

John Muar.

Willeam Jeameson.

Wm. Agnew.

Jeremiah Thompson.

John Mitchell.

James Paterson.

Joseph Curry.

David Wilson.

Patrick Anderson.

John Gray.

James Greg.

Alexr. M'Bride, Bart.

Sam M'Givorn.

John Hurdock.

Geo. Campbell.

James Shorswood.

John M'Laughlen.

George M'Laughlen.

James Henre.

Thomas Ramsay.

Francis Richie.

James Gregg.

Robert Boyd.

Hugh Tarbel.

David Tarbel.

his

John x Robb

mark.

John Heslet.

George M'Alester.

Thomas Ramadge.

James Campbell.

David Lindsay.

Robt. Given.

James Laidlay.

Benjamin Galt.

Daniel Todd.

Robt. Barr.

Hugh Hollmes.

Robt. King.

John Black.

Peter Christy.

James Smith.

James Smith.

Patrick Smith.

Sameuel Ceverelle.

James Craig.

Samuel Wilson, M.A.

Gawen Jirwen.

Robert Miller.

Thomas Wilson.

William Wilson.

James Bryce.

Ninian Pattison.

James Thompson.

John Thompson.

Robert Thompson.

Adam Thompson.

Alexander Pattison.

Thomas Dunlop.

John Willson.

David Willson.

Thomas Walas.

Thomas Cewch (?)

William Boyd.	Patrick Orr.	Thomas Boyd.
William Christy.	Bonill Orr.	Hugh Rogers.
John Boyd.	William Orr.	John Craig.
William Boyd.	John Orr.	Wm. Boyle.
Hugh Orr.	Jeams Lenox.	Benj. Boyle.
Robert Johnston.	John Leslie.	Ja. Kennedy.
Thomas Black.	John Lason.	M. Stirling.
Peter Murray.	John Calvil.	Samuel Ross.
John Jameson.	Samuel Wat.	John Ramsay.
John Cochran.	James Craford.	John M'Keen.
Samuel Gouston.	David Henderson.	James Willstone.
Thomas Shadey.	Mathew Storah (?)	Robert M'Keen.
William Ker.	David Widborn.	John Boyd.
Thomas Moore.	Luk Wat.	Andrew Dunlap.
Andrew Watson.	Robert Hendre.	James Ramsey.
John Thonson.	William Walas.	William Park.
James M'Kerrall.	James Baverlan.	John Blair.
Hugh Stockman.	Peter Simpson.	James Thompson.
Andrew Cochran.	Thomas M'Laughlin.	Lawrence M'Laughlin.
James Carkley.	Robert Boyd.	Will. Campbell.
Lawrence Dod.	Andrew Agnew.	James Bankhead.
Sandrs Mear.	James King.	Andrew Patrick.
John Jackson.	Thomas Elder.	James M'Fee.
James Curry.	Daniel Johnston.	James Tonson (?)
James Elder.	Robert Walker.	George Anton.
James Acton.	David Jonston.	James Anton.
— [name illegible].	James Steuart.	George Kairy.
Samuel Smith.	John Murray.	Thomas Freeland.
Andrew Dodg.	Thomas Blackwel.	Thomas Hunter.
James Forsaith.	Thomas Wilson.	his
Andrew Fleeming.	John Ross.	David × M'Kerrell
George Thomson.	William Johnston.	mark.
James Browster.	John King.	Horgos (?) Kennedy.
Thomas [illegible].	Andrew Curry.	his
Jeatter Fultone.	John [illegible].	John × Suene
Robt. Wear.	James [illegible].	mark.
Alexr. Donaldson.	Samuel Code.	his
Archd. Duglass.	James Blak.	Adam × Ditkoy
Robert Stiven.	Thomas Gro.	mark.
Robt. Henry.	Thomys Ouston.	Alexander Kid.
James Pettey.	Jame Gro.	Thomas Lorie.
David Bigger.	John Clark.	Thomas Hines.
David Patteson.	Thomas M'Fader.	his
David [illegible].	David Hanson.	Will × Halkins
John Wight.	Richard Acton.	mark.
Joseph Wight.	James Claire.	George Anton.
Robt. Willson.	Thomas Elder.	John Colbreath.
James Ball.	Jeremiah Claire.	William Caird.
Andrew Cord.	Jacob Clark.	John Gray.
James Nesmith.	Abram Baberley.	John Woodman (?)
John Black.	Stephen Murdock.	Andrew Watson.
John Thompson.	Robert Murdock.	William Bleair.
Samuel Boyd.	John Murdock.	his
Lawrence M'Laugh-	William Jennson.	Hugh × Blare
len.	James Rodger.	mark.
John Moor.	John Buyers.	William Blare.
James M'Keen.	Robert Smith.	Samuel Anton.
John Lamont.	Adam Dean.	James Knox.
John Smith.	Randall Alexander.	Robert Hendry.

John Knox.	David Craig.	James Morieson.
William Hendry.	Weall M'Neall.	his
William Dunkan.	Thomas Orr.	Joseph × Beverlan
David Duncan.	Wm. Caldwell.	mark.
John Muree.	James Moore, jr.	his
James Gillmor.	Sam. Gunion.	Robert × Crage
Samuel Gillmor.	Matthew Lord.	mark.
Alexander Chocran.	Robert Knox.	John Thompson.
Edward M'Kene.	Alex. M'Gregore.	Hugh Tomson.
John Morduck.	James Trotter.	James Still.
his	Alexander M'Neall.	his
Samuel × M'Mun	Robert Roo.	James × Hogg
mark.	Joseph Watson.	mark.
Henry Calual.	Robert Miller.	Thomas Hanson.
Thomas M'Laughlen.	John Smeally.	John Hanson.
Robert Hogg.	James Morieson.	Richard Etone.
John Millar.	James Walker.	James Etone.
Hugh Calwell.	Robert Walker.	Thomas Etone.
William Boyd.	Robert Walker.	Samuel Hanson.
John Stirling.	his	James Cochran.
Samuel Smith.	William × Calwall	James Hulton (?)
John Lamond.	mark.	Thomas Hasetone (?)
Robert Lamond.	William Walker.	John Cochran.
Robert Knox.	his	William Cochran.
William Wilson.	Samuel × Young	his
Wm. Paterson.	mark.	Samuel × Hunter
James Alexander.	Alexander Richey.	mark.
James Nesmith.		John Hunter.*

\* From imperfect penmanship, most likely, in the original, some of these names, it is obvious, have not been accurately deciphered. I give them, without any attempt at correction, as I find them in Parker.—T. W.

## CHAPTER LII.

ROBERT MACMASTER (1724—1754),

MINISTER AT CONNOR AND DUBLIN (USHER'S QUAY).

1. *Christ's Nativity* a ground of great joy. A Sermon preparatory to the Lord's Supper; preached to the Congregation of Ussher's Quay on Christmas Day. 1731.
2. *Liberty without Licentiousness*. A Sermon preached before the General Synod of Ulster at Dungannon, on Tuesday, June 17, 1740. With some additions and marginal notes. 12mo, pp. 47. [Gal. v. 13.] *Dublin*, 1740. A. C. B.
3. *A Funeral Sermon* occasioned by the Death of the late Reverend and Learned Mr. John Alexander, M.A.; preached to the Congregation of Plunket Street, Nov. 6, 1743. 12mo, pp. 24. [1 Cor. xv. 26.] *Dublin*, 1743. A. C. B.

ROBERT MACMASTER was a licentiate of the Presbytery of Antrim; and after Mr. Mastertown removed to Belfast (see ch. xxxv.), he was chosen as minister of Connor, in which congregation he was ordained on the 10th of March, 1724.\* The following scene, which occurred at his ordination, is given by Livingstone (see ch. xxvi.), in his letters to Wodrow, as illustrative of the state of popular feeling during the heat of the Non-subscription Controversy:—

“I think the temper of our people will best appear to you by a late instance which happened in the Presbytery of Antrim with relation to the people of Connor,

\* There is some variation as to this date, some giving March 18th, and others April 5th. I give the date assigned in the MS. *Minutes of the Synod of Ulster*. Probably it is the original date fixed for the ordination, and the actual ordination may have occurred on some of the other days.

from which Mr. Mastertown was lately transported to Belfast. That people having called Mr. Macmaster, a very hopeful youth, and his trials being past, they supplicate the Presbytery that Mr. Mastertown, their late minister, might preside in the ordination, or, if that could not be granted, he being a member of another Presbytery, that a subscribing minister might preside, insinuating that they resolved against having a Non-subscriber his ordaining their minister. The subscribing ministers, knowing the temper of that people, and foreseeing the confusion that might happen, were willing to comply with their desire; but the Non-subscribers violently opposed it. So when the proposal was laid aside, then the people supplicate that a subscribing minister should be appointed to preside, with which, after some resentment, the N.S.S. complied; but they insisted that one of their number should be appointed to preach the sermon. Against this the people remonstrated very warmly, but the Presbytery, to keep peace among themselves, appointed one of the N.S.S. to preach at the ordination, and reason with the people to make them easy. The people expressed a great dislike at the Presbytery's appointment, and told them they would not comply. The Presbytery, however, appointed the time of the ordination, and accordingly met at the time appointed; but, when they came, found the doors locked and the people all absent, but a few commissioners to attend the Presbytery. Nor had they suffered the edict to be served. In short, they produced a new supplication for Mr. Mastertown to be ordainer, and told the Presbytery they would allow no Non-subscribers to preach to them. The Presbytery was forced to comply, and the N.S.S. having entered a protestation, went off in great disgust, and the ordination was again appointed that day three weeks. It was generally believed the N.S.S. would absent themselves from the ordination, or, if present, enter a protestation. But they came to better temper, and gave no disturbance. It was well it was no worse; for the people had consultations among themselves, and had well-nigh

resolved that no Non-subscribers should lay on hands on their minister; but we got them dissuaded with much to do." \*

In 1729 the Synod sanctioned the removal of Mr. Macmaster from Connor to Usher's Quay, Dublin, which Mr. Gray, as stated in the previous chapter, had deserted, in order to return to Taboyn, and to found the congregation of St. Johnston.

Macmaster's first publication was a sermon on *Christ's Nativity*, which he preached on a Christmas Day, preparatory to the administration of the Lord's Supper to his congregation, and to which he prefixed an essay, with the design of showing that there is no historical evidence to prove that Christ was born on the 25th of December, and that the Lord is dishonoured by the manner in which the so-called anniversary of His birth is usually observed.

In 1739 he was called to fill the Moderator's chair in the Synod of Ulster. The Synod met that year at Dungannon, and had before it the case of Richard Aprichard, a licentiate of the Church, who held, it appears, rather lax views on the doctrines of grace. When resigning office the following year, he preached and afterwards published his Sermon, *Liberty without Licentiousness*. It is a very able discourse, evidently the product of a clear and sober judgment, and exhibiting metaphysical acumen of no mean order. He shows in it:—1. That there is a religious liberty to which we are called by the Gospel, that is, that every man in matters of conscience is to judge for himself and on his own responsibility; and under this head he lays down rules for using this liberty aright. 2. That there are bounds and limits within which this liberty ought to be restrained. Under this head he shows that reason is not to be the standard of faith; that to follow, however sincerely, an erroneous judgment will not justify us in the sight of God; that a blameless life will prove no excuse for doctrinal error; and that in religion we ought not to travel outside the circle of things which are

\* Wodrow MSS. vol. xxi. No. 87.



revealed. 3. That when liberty passes beyond these limits it is abused, and becomes the occasion of sin. He ends by giving some occasions for the proper exercise of Christian liberty. These are: Search the Scriptures; judge for yourselves, but do not consider yourselves innocent if you judge erroneously; profess the truth, and guard against the entrance of error; be concerned for the glory of Christ. This discourse is, in my opinion, the best reply that had yet appeared to Abernethy's sermon on *Personal Persuasion*, which had been published twenty years before.

Three years afterwards, Mr. Macmaster was called upon to preach the *Funeral Sermon* of his friend and neighbour, the Rev. John Alexander of Plunket Street (see ch. xlviii.). In this discourse, which was subsequently published, he considers, first, the representation of death given in the text, next how it shall be destroyed, and by whom, and then ends by making an application of the subject to the occasion. It is a sound Gospel discourse, creditable alike to the principles, judgment, and ability of the author.

What his private means were is not known, but being the minister of a wealthy congregation in the metropolis, he must have been in more easy circumstances than most of his brethren. At the Synod of 1745, we find him promising to pay twenty shillings a year to each of seven poor widows of deceased ministers, and to continue the benefaction annually during his or their lives. As yet the Widows' Fund Association had not been founded: the wives and children of deceased ministers were often left in poverty and distress, and there must have been more poor families than seven to whom such a benefaction would have been acceptable.

Mr. Macmaster died on the 27th February, 1754. Armstrong describes him as a man of considerable talents and of great zeal in his sacred duties. I have not been able to ascertain whether he left any descendants.\*

\* *Minutes of Synod of Ulster: Macmaster's Sermons: Livingstone's Letters to Wodrow: Armstrong's Sketches.*

## REASON IS NOT THE RULE OF FAITH.

We must not make our own understanding or reason the standard of our faith, or a proper judge of every revealed truth. Our religion is a reasonable religion, yet it is not founded on the principles of human reason. Our faith is a rational persuasion, but 'tis only as founded on the Word of God, or the testimony of Him who cannot deceive. Reason is not our rule ; it is only the discerner of it. The written law of God is the only rule of religion to Christians : and therefore, in judging of Divine truths, we must keep within the bounds of it. In the Bible we find all the necessary articles of our faith, and a plain and certain directory for our conduct. It contains the whole will of God as far as He has thought fit to reveal it. By this only rule, then, we are to judge of everything proposed to be believed, and of everything to be performed. The authority of God has made the Scripture the measure of our faith ; to this law and testimony therefore we must go, and speak according to this Word.

But though it is the Scripture, and not reason, that is the standard of all revealed truth, yet is this entirely consistent with the liberty of every man's private judgment. It is reason that brings us to revelation, and satisfies us that it comes from God ; consequently it leads us naturally into the belief of the doctrines of Christianity, and then modestly submits to them. There is a sweet harmony between reason and revelation ; they are both Divine, and therefore cannot contradict each other : they both lead to the same end ; they are both the voice of God, and therefore must be hearkened to with great attention. But still revelation is the rule according to which reason judges of all those religious doctrines which are proposed to our belief ; and when it has impartially examined them, and finds the evidences and proofs of them to be full and sufficient, it then pronounces that they ought to be received. And here reason stops ; not as superseded by the Scripture, but as taking the Scripture for its guide, and so declaring all the doctrines it finds therein to be of a Divine original and worthy to be believed, but all other to be false and spurious.

The short is this, that though reason ought to be employed in judging about revealed truths, yet we must not make it the supreme judge of supernatural verities ; but, when a doctrine appears to be from God, we must acquiesce in it, and, though it be above our comprehension, we must believe it, because our reason finds it in the Word of God, which carries in it all the reasons of believing. It is the noblest exercise of reason to believe Him that cannot deceive us.—*Liberty without Licentiousness*, pp. 9-11.



## PERSUASION CANNOT SET ASIDE ANTECEDENT OBLIGATION.

In cases of an indifferent nature, where we are at liberty to believe or not believe, to act or not to act, it is certain that what is not agreeable to the persuasion of our own mind is sin. But where there is a prior obligation upon us to believe and act, our persuasion can neither set aside such obligation, nor alter the nature of it. And this is the case in reference to all the Scripture truths, whether essential or unessential, the belief of which God requires of us. There arises an obligation from the authority of God and the perspicuity of the Scriptures to know and believe these things, antecedent to our persuasion concerning them. If, then, notwithstanding the sufficiency of all necessary assistance afforded us for discovering truth and duty, we through our own fault fall into errors, and judge evil to be good and good evil—whatever sinful necessity we bring ourselves under to do this, the former obligation to know and practise our duty retains its full force, and cannot be cancelled by an erroneous judgment. For instance; every man to whom the Scriptures are proposed, and has a capacity to make that use of his Bible which God intended, stands firmly obliged to believe Jesus to be the Eternal Son of God, and the Saviour of a lost world, and to depend on His satisfaction for salvation. And if any person (a Jew, *e.g.*) who enjoys the advantages just now mentioned will neither believe Jesus to be the true Messiah nor trust in Him for salvation, because, after all the pains he has taken to inform his judgment, he is firmly persuaded that Jesus of Nazareth is not the Son of God, and therefore he thinks it an heinous crime to believe in Him or to make Him the object of his worship: now, I ask, will this person's erroneous judgment (even though he should be persuaded he was sincere in his inquiries) make void the antecedent obligation he was under to believe in Jesus, and to receive Christianity as a Divine institution? Certainly it will not. It retains its full force, whatever his private judgment may be. And if it does retain its full force, he is bound by the authority and command of God to renounce his Judaism and to embrace the Christian religion. And if he does not, he sins against God, notwithstanding the good opinion he has of his own sincerity.—*Liberty, &c.*, pp. 15-17.

## CONSCIENCE NOT THE GUIDE OF LIFE.

But against all the reasoning under this head, it will be objected that it is every man's duty to obey his conscience. I answer: If our conscience be rightly informed and act under the direction of the Word of God, we are, in that case, bound to act according to our judgment. In reference to this all men are agreed. But the main point to be debated is, what obligation a man is under to act according to an erroneous judgment? And

to this I would answer, that if a man is ignorant of or misunderstands a religious doctrine that has been fairly proposed to him, a doctrine that he has had a sufficient capacity and helps to discover, he cannot follow his erroneous persuasion without sin. For notwithstanding all the authority of conscience, it can never excuse a man if in obedience to it he do an ill thing. This appears to be evident beyond all dispute. We are assured that there are many errors in faith and doctrine which Christ hates (Rev. ii. 15), though the persons who believe and teach them may be fully persuaded it is their duty so to do. When our Lord says in the Gospels, the time shall come that they who kill His disciples shall *think they do God service*, He speaks plainly of an action performed according to the dictates of an erroneous conscience, but at the same time He speaks of it as a most unjust and wicked action, and such as deserved to be punished with the utmost severity. The Jews in crucifying our Saviour committed the most execrable of all crimes, and yet it is certain they committed it by following the motions of their conscience. If our conscience, through our own fault, lose its way, and lead us to do that which God has forbidden, or to omit what He has commanded, it will be no sufficient excuse to say that we did but act according to our judgment. And the reason is, because our judgment is not the standard of what we are bound to believe or practise; nor is our obligation to assent to the doctrines or to perform the precepts of the Gospel grounded upon our conceptions and apprehensions concerning them, but upon the authority of God and the fulness and sufficiency of the means and assistances afforded us for discovering them. An instance or two will make this matter still plainer. A Deist discerns not the truth of the Christian religion, and believes it to be imposture; does it therefore follow that he may and ought to obey his erroneous conscience and persuasion concerning the Gospel? No; because Christianity comes with such convincing evidences of truth and divinity, that no man can be ignorant of them and not deserve blame.—*Liberty, &c.*, pp. 33–35.

## CHAPTER LIII.

JAMES DUCHAL, D.D. (1730—1761),

MINISTER AT ANTRIM AND DUBLIN (WOOD STREET).

1. *The Practice of Religion* recommended as excellent and reasonable. In three sermons. pp. 114. *London*, 1728. A. C. B.
2. *A Letter* from a Gentleman to his Friend, a Subscribing Minister in the North of Ireland. [Anon., but Duchal supposed to be the Author.] pp. 16. *Dublin*, 1731. A. C. B.
3. *Remarks* upon a Late Paper entitled "Plain Reasons," &c., by a Friend of Liberty and Truth. [Acknowledged by Duchal.] pp. 35. *Belfast*, 1732. M. C. D.
4. *A Sermon* occasioned by the death of Mrs. Francis Bristow, the late wife of Roger Bristow, Esq. Preached at Antrim, December 21st, 1735. [1 Tim. ii. 10.] pp. 27. *Belfast*, 1736.
5. *A Sermon* occasioned by the death of the Rev. Mr. Hugh Scott, Preached at Newton, April 4, 1736. [1 John iii. 2.] pp. 28. *Belfast*, 1736. A. C. B.
6. *A Sermon* on occasion of the much lamented death of the late Reverend Mr. John Abernethy. Preached in Antrim, December 7, 1740. With an Appendix containing brief Memoirs of the Lives and Characters of the late Reverend Messieurs Thomas Shaw, William Taylor, Michael Bruce, and Samuel Haliday, Protestant Dissenting Ministers in the Counties of Down and Antrim. Published at the desire of the Ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim, by James Kirkpatrick, D.D. pp. 62. *Belfast*, 1741. [Sermon by Duchal; the Appendix by Kirkpatrick.] [Gen. i. 24.] A. C. B.
7. *A Sermon* from Ecc. vii. 4, on the death of Dr. Arbuckle, a physician, and member of Wood Street Congregation. Preached January 4, 1747. pp. 42. *Dublin*, 1747.
8. *Presumptive Arguments* for the Truth and Divine Authority of the Christian Religion. In ten Sermons, to which is added a Sermon on God's Moral Government. 8vo, pp. 447. *London*, 1753. C. P. L.

9. *Two Essays* in the second volume of the *Theological Repository* —1. On the Obligation of Truth ; 2. On the Doctrine of the Atonement.
10. *Posthumous Sermons*. In 3 vols. 8vo. Containing 52 Sermons. *Dublin*, 1764 and 1767.

JAMES DUCHAL was born at Antrim in 1697, and in boyhood had the advantage, or, as some may think, the misfortune, of being educated by the Rev. John Abernethy (see ch. xxv.). He studied at the University of Glasgow, and after taking licence was settled over a small Dissenting congregation at Cambridge in England. He spent about ten years there, during which time he prosecuted his private studies with ardour, more particularly in ethics and divinity. The only literary product of his English ministry was three rather dry and stiff discourses on the *Practice of Religion*, which he published in 1728.

In August 1730, he was settled in the old congregation of Antrim, then vacant in consequence of the removal of Mr. Abernethy to Dublin. Soon after his settlement he got into controversy with his orthodox neighbour the Rev. William Holmes, pastor of those people who, disaffected in consequence of the principles of Abernethy, had withdrawn from his ministry, and had formed a new congregation in connection with the Synod of Ulster.\* Mr. Duchal commenced the controversy by publishing anonymously, as was then the practice even of some respectable ministers, *A Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend*, in which he opened up afresh the old Non-subscription Controversy, of which by this time the public had grown heartily tired, and sought to vindicate the position of the Presbytery of Antrim, with which he had become lately connected. From the standpoint of a layman, who professes to be an impartial spectator of the two ecclesiastical parties, he deals with the question whether any test of orthodoxy, in addition to the Holy Scriptures, ought to be imposed as a term of communion, and whether a profession of faith in the Scriptures as the Word of God,

\* Now the First Congregation of Antrim in connection with the General Assembly.

and in the Christian faith as therein revealed, is enough to entitle a man to communion, provided no objection lie against him in other respects. The latter question he answers in the affirmative, and supports his answer by the common arguments employed by the Non-subscribers. Thus, under the guise of an impartial spectator, a very decided partisan attempts to gain a hearing for his opinions. The appearance of this work led to his neighbour, Mr. Holmes (see ch. liv.), issuing his *Plain Reasons*. Mr. Duchal rejoined in his *Remarks*, and Mr. Holmes followed up with his *Impartial Reflections*.

The ten years which Duchal spent at Antrim produced nothing in addition to what has been stated, except three *Funeral Sermons*, the last of which, being preached at Wood Street in honour of the late Mr. Abernethy, led to his removal to Dublin as the successor of his friend, and may be said to mark the termination of his ministry at Antrim. This sermon is specially valuable for having added thereto, by way of Appendix, a sketch of the lives and characters of four leading ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim from the pen of Dr. James Kirkpatrick (see ch. xviii.).

Mr. Duchal became pastor of Wood Street in 1741, and henceforth the sphere of his labours was limited to the capital. His biographers delight to mention it as an extraordinary instance of his industry, that during the twenty years over which his Dublin ministry extended, he composed no less than seven hundred sermons. Of course, the greatness of this feat must depend altogether on the manner in which they were composed, as well as on their value in other respects. But these were not the only intellectual products of that time. In 1753 he published a work of more pretensions than any on which he had yet ventured, entitled *Presumptive Arguments for the Truth and Divine Authority of the Christian Religion*, abounding, we are told, "in judicious and pointed reasoning, sound philosophy, and liberality of sentiment." In the character of Christ, and in that of the two Apostles Paul



and John, he finds strong presumptive proof of the truth of Christianity, and the object of the work is to present the argument in detail. Soon after the publication of this treatise, the University of Glasgow marked its sense of the service which he had done to Christianity, by bestowing upon him the degree of D.D.

Dr. Duchal was an ardent student as well as pastor on to the end. In his last days he gave much attention to the study of the Hebrew language, but it does not appear that he succeeded in turning his Aramaic studies to much practical account. He died at Dublin in 1761. After his death a selection was made from his sermons, and published in three volumes. Six small manuscript volumes, containing sermons which appear to have been preached by him at Cambridge and at Antrim, are preserved in the library of Magee College, Derry.

A writer in Aikin's *General Biography* remarks of Dr. Duchal, that "his character appears to have been truly estimable for piety, morality, modesty, candour, and benevolence. In his religious sentiments he was very liberal, and he was a warm friend to freedom of inquiry, rightly judging that whatever has truth and importance to recommend it will bear the light and challenge the closest discussion. As a preacher, Dr. Duchal sustained considerable reputation in the rank of rational divines in Ireland, from the strong sense, frequent originality of sentiment, genuine devotional spirit, and easy unaffected style which distinguished his discourses." Dr. Armstrong says that "he was a strenuous supporter of the rational and practical doctrines of the Gospel, as opposed to mystical and fanatical notions." He means by this simply that he was a cold moralist, destitute of all evangelical sentiment, and tinctured with Unitarianism. Let us fondly hope that an able divine and Christian minister was entitled to much higher praise.\*

\* Reid's MS. *Catalogue and History*: Armstrong's *Sketches*: Duchal's *Works*: Aikin's *General Biography*.

## THE LATE DEBATES.

A load of disorders that has long pressed me, and grows every day heavier, forbids me to expect that I shall continue much longer in this world ; and it is now nothing to me. But before I go hence and be no more, I am willing to give you my last thoughts upon your late controversies, in which I think the most valuable interest that ever was, or can be in the world, is very nearly concerned. And I hope you will charitably believe—I am sure my very heart says it is true—that I set me down to this without being conscious of any partial inclination to, or prejudice against, any party, having no intention but to serve the common interests of Christianity.

My station in life did not call me to act any part in your debates but that of a spectator. And though I could not be an unconcerned one, yet being without any interests or views that might bias me to either side, I had nothing to do but inform my own mind the best I could, and to pray heartily that truth and vital Christianity might prevail. And now, after repeated inquiries, at my own leisure I give you my sense of things freely, hoping that if I do no good, I shall do no harm.

It cannot be surprising to any one who has considered human nature that this debate should have been managed with such heat on both sides, and that it should end in such a rupture. It would have been surprising if it had been otherwise. And methinks he does but slightly consider things, that will condemn any side by the lump. Although the rupture was unhappy, there might be persons of great worth in each party—they might be generally so. I am sure, from a personal acquaintance of long standing with many of them, I know both SS. and Non-SS. that are men of much knowledge and wisdom, of great piety and worth. Nor can I question that what they did on both sides they did with upright intentions and an approving conscience. And it is to me most pleasing to think how happily they will agree in heaven that have so warmly debated upon earth. A time does come when an Abernethy and a Masterton, a Kennedy and a Kirkpatrick, a Bruce and a Livingstone, will understand one another perfectly, when holy light and love in perfection will make it impossible for them to maintain controversies any more.—*Letter*, pp. 1, 2.

## CHARACTER AND MISSION OF CHRIST.

At first sight it appeareth that the character of Jesus Christ is very extraordinary, indeed quite above nature in its present state ; for it is absolutely perfect in all moral respects, and such as we do not at all meet with in this world. But not only have the writers of the New Testament introduced a perfect character in life, but they have, from the accounts they give of our Saviour,

as the only-begotten of the Father, raised the expectation of the reader to the utmost. This astonishing character they are to support with respect to the design upon which He came into the world, the manner in which this design was executed, and through a vast variety of incidents and discourses with such as attended Him. Let us consider these things particularly, with fairness and candour, and see whether there is the least probability that this character should be fictitious.

The sacred historians evidently set out the foundation of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, the long-expected Saviour and King of the Jews. Whether these prophecies appear to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ or not, I am not now to inquire, or what notions the Jews in general, or some particular persons, might have concerning the person who was to be their Messiah. But the reader, from the first accounts of Him, is surprised with His being called *Emmanuel*—God with us—a denomination taken plainly from the Prophet Isaiah vii. 14. Here is, then, a Divine person brought upon the stage, and the descriptive characters of Him throughout the New Testament are suitable to such a beginning. He is the “Son of God,” the “only-begotten of the Father;” standing, therefore, in a relation to Him in which no other person stood, or possibly could stand. He is represented as “the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His person :” the name of God is given to Him ; creating power is ascribed to Him, for “by Him all things were created, whether visible or invisible,” and by Him God “made the world :” an authority is given to Him to which all things are subjected, “He only excepted who did put all things under Him.” Such are the strains in which He is spoken of by the New Testament writers.

This Divine person is to appear in our world in the form of a man, and His generation as a man is miraculous : conceived and born of a virgin, His conception and birth predicted by an angel, and His nativity celebrated by a multitude of the heavenly host ; some persons directed to Him by the prophetic Spirit, as the son of David and the promised founder of an everlasting kingdom. Here is indeed an astonishing combination of most extraordinary circumstances to raise the reader’s expectation concerning Him.

And it will be immediately suggested, for what end did this Divine person come into the world ? Surely it must be something very great and important, something worthy of such an astonishing interposition. This great design, the sacred writers plainly intimate, they did at first mistake. They looked for a temporal prince, who should make the Jewish state great and flourishing, and subdue the nations to it, making the seed of Abraham chief among them, and every way great and happy. But when the counsel of Heaven came to unfold itself, we see quite another thing, but unspeakably greater, intended. The Son of God cometh for the redemption and salvation of mankind ; to raise them from the



ruins of nature, in which, through the prevalence of vice and superstition, they lay ; to restore them from a state of guilt and condemnation to the favour of God ; to establish a kingdom of truth and righteousness in the world, a kingdom worthy of the Son of God, into whose hands all authority was committed by the Father ; and to collect as the subjects of this kingdom all the good and worthy of every nation and age into one body, to whom this great Prince giveth, according to the counsels of Divine wisdom and grace, eternal life. This is a design which will be acknowledged to be the worthiest and greatest that could be formed, in which the world above as well as this is deeply concerned. The dominion of our Saviour is not over any nation upon earth, or all the earth only, but over principalities and powers, over all the holy angels ; and no doubt serveth purposes with respect to them worthy of such a constitution, though not particularly known to us. What we are principally concerned in is, that the Son of Man came to "seek and to save that which was lost."—*Presumptive Arguments*, pp. 78-82.

## CHAPTER LIV.

WILLIAM HOLMES, M.A. (1730--1750),

MINISTER AT ANTRIM.

1. *Plain Reasons* against joining with the Non-subscribers in their unlimited scheme of Religious Communion, being an Answer to *A Letter from a Gentleman to a Subscribing Minister*. pp. 28. Dublin, 1732. [Reprinted at Belfast. 8vo, pp. 28. 1732.]
2. *Impartial Reflections* on Mr. Duchal's *Remarks upon an Answer to a Letter from a Gentleman to a Subscribing Minister*. pp. 32. Belfast, 1732.
3. *An Essay upon Religious Melancholy*. In two sermons. The First upon the nature and kinds of that disorder ; the Second upon the scruples that arise in the minds of such dejected souls ; where particularly of, first, desertion ; secondly, heart sins and blasphemous thoughts ; thirdly, blaspheming against the Holy Ghost ; fourthly, election and reprobation ; fifthly, the day of grace being past, and sinning beyond the mercies of God. The whole concluded with some advice to those that are melancholy upon religious accounts. Both sermons preached at Antrim from Ps. xlii. 11. 4to, pp. 38. Belfast, 1734. M. C. D.
4. *Some Thoughts* proposed to the consideration of the General Synod in relation to a Controversy now depending concerning the extent of the *Magistrate's Power* in matters of religion. 12mo, pp. 16. Belfast, 1739. M. C. D.

WHEN Mr. Abernethy (see ch. xxv.), in common with his brethren of the Presbytery of Antrim, was excluded from the membership of the Synod of Ulster, those of his congregation, whose attachment to subscribing principles and to orthodoxy surpassed their attachment to him and to the old walls in which they had so long worshipped, retired from his ministry, and formed themselves into a new congregation in connection with

the Synod. This congregation, which was then the Second Presbyterian Congregation, but is now known as First Antrim on the roll of the General Assembly, gave a call to Mr. WILLIAM HOLMES, who was ordained as their first minister on the 7th of September, 1730.

No doubt there must have been for a time some unpleasant feeling between the old congregation and the new—a feeling which the removal of Abernethy to Wood Street, and the settlement of Duchal (see ch. liii.) in his room, would do nothing to diminish. The natural result was, that a small local controversy now arose, which in itself was an echo of the great controversy, the sound of which for some years before had disturbed the province. Mr. Duchal, as already described, published his *Letter to a Gentleman*, in which he made an anonymous and covert attack on the principles which Mr. Holmes and his congregation represented. This, of course, led to a reply from Mr. Holmes, published under the name of *Plain Reasons*—a pamphlet which I have not seen, but which Dr. Reid says is “a very clear and able defence of subscribing principles.” Mr. Duchal rejoined in his *Remarks*, which was published also without a name, but which the author subsequently acknowledged. This led to the publication of the *Impartial Reflections*, written in reply. That closed the controversy, so far as the two ministers were concerned; but a layman of Belfast, Mr. Hugh Blair, thought it necessary to interfere by publishing *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. William Holmes of Antrim concerning his “Impartial Reflections” upon Mr. Duchal’s “Remarks” upon an “Answer” to a “Letter from a Gentleman to a Subscribing Minister.”* By H. B. of Belfast, Layman. pp. 16. 1732. To this tract Mr. Holmes did not think it necessary to reply. The truth is, that nothing new and important could be said on either side. The subject was worn out, and the public were weary of it.

The *Essay on Religious Melancholy* indicates its nature by its extended title. Without professing to say much that is interesting, it handles with some ability the doubts and fears which are apt to trouble

desponding souls, and proves the writer's intimate acquaintance with Christian experience and Divine truth. The tract on the *Magistrate's Power* is supposed to be written by him. It defends the Confession against the charge of sanctioning persecution.

Comparatively little is known of Mr. Holmes. His ministry was under the average length. He died on the 1st of May, 1750.\*

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#### ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

I must own the doctrine of the Divine decrees is a great depth, into which we cannot dive far, without taking upon us to be wise above what is written. I would think it no hard task to prove (and the Arminians themselves will most allow it) that the style and language of the Scripture seems much to favour this doctrine; and reason seems also to suggest that there must be a certain and fixed decree of all future events, otherwise God would not be omniscient, or foresee all things without decreeing them; for there can be no certain prescience of future contingencies. What is contingent may either be or not be; what is contingent, therefore, is not certainly to be; and what is not certainly to be cannot be certainly foreseen to be. If the reasoning be just, then God's infallible knowledge of futurities depends upon His decrees. Again, men are not surely mere machines, but somehow moral agents, otherwise they could not be accountable for their conduct in life. Now, this I say, it is not difficult to prove that there must pass a Divine decree concerning all events, and previous to all that we do on the one side of the question: on the other part, that men are in some sense free agents, and that there must be some such thing as liberty in human actions, when the expression is understood in a qualified sense. But wherein that liberty consists, or how it can subsist with a Divine decree, is what many have fruitlessly puzzled themselves about, and they most, I mean melancholy and ignorant persons, who of all others are most unfit to determine the question. Perhaps the best answer that can be given to this difficulty is that of a great author, who honestly confesses that, though he has sufficient evidence to found his assent upon in receiving both these points separately, yet he cannot find how they subsist or hang together. And I am apt to believe that, after the most penetrating divines have ransacked their inventions to the utmost, they will find a greater mystery than at their first beginning to think of it; that when they have done

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod*: Reid's *History*, chap. xxvi. Note 14.

their utmost, they must leave it as a secret that belongs to God, not to be unfolded until we arrive at the more understanding world. It is, therefore, a most unreasonable thing for weak minds to trouble themselves about the decrees of God, which, being infinitely above our understanding, must be as much above our duty to pry into. Our duty is to search the Scriptures, and, from the marks and characters there to be found, to judge our state whether it be good or bad. Whatever promises God has there made to mankind, these we may apply to ourselves wherever we come up to the conditions, and are qualified to receive them ; and whatever threatenings the sacred oracles of God pronounce against the forward and rebellious, we are to look upon ourselves as obnoxious, if we prevent not the execution of them by a timely repentance and seasonable reformation. This is the method which God has appointed us for coming at the true knowledge of our own state, and not the curious searching into the book of His eternal decrees, which are altogether secret to us. "Why, then, art thou cast down, O my soul?"—*Essay on Melancholy*, p. 32.

#### REMONSTRANCE AGAINST PERSECUTION.

Again, if it be urged that there is a Divine warrant for putting men to death in the law of Moses upon account of principle, and several precedents for it, I answer that was a peculiar theocracy, and God, who knew their hearts, pronounced their sentence. And I would willingly join issues with such objectors, could I but prevail upon them to have patience until they could show an uncontested commission from above for their proceedings, and not to put their poor brother to death because his conscience is not in every minute point, to a hair's-breadth, of a size with theirs, until they can show his dead-warrant from heaven.

Once more, if any say that men may be distressed, though not persecuted to death, on account of heresy, I reply, what if after this their conscience will not ply and bend? Will they not be punished for obstinacy? will not a higher penalty be inflicted when a lesser has missed of its desired effect? If the law were wholesome in itself, it is fit that it should have sufficient sanction, and not be evaded by the obstinacy of the criminal.—*Magistrate's Power*, p. 12.

## CHAPTER LV.

JOHN MEARS, M.A. (1720—1767),

MINISTER AT NEWTOWNARDS, CLONMEL, AND DUBLIN.

1. *A Catechism*, or an Instruction in the Christian Religion, by way of Question and Answer. In three parts; for the use of adult persons. pp. 48. *London*, 1732. A. C. B.
2. *Sermon* on the occasion of the much lamented death of the Rev. Mr. John Abernethy, M.A., preached in Wood Street, Dec. 7, 1740. 8vo, pp. 48. *Dublin*, 1740. A. C. B.
3. *A Short Explanation* of the end and design of the *Lord's Supper*, with suitable Meditations and Prayers, and a Preface recommending a due attendance on that sacred institution. 12mo, pp. 136. *Dublin*, 1758. T. W.
4. *Forms of Devotion* for the use of Families, with a Preface recommending the practice of family religion. By the Revs. J. Leland, J. Duchal, I. Weld, and J. Mears. To which are annexed a short explanation of the end and design of the Lord's Supper, with suitable Meditations and Prayers; and a Preface recommending a due attendance on that sacred institution, also a Postscript and Supplement. [Prayers, pp. 180: Supplement, pp. 152.] *Dublin*, 1772.

THE father of the above writer, called by the same name as himself, was the first minister of Loughbrickland after the Revolution. Synods and Presbyteries two centuries ago were much more autocratic in their rule than now, and sometimes disregarded the wish of the individual in their effort to advance the good of the cause. In 1696 a Committee of Synod directed him to remove from Loughbrickland to Longford, and the Synod in the following year confirmed that decision. In 1706 he was loosed from Longford, and was installed in the congregation of Newtownards on the 6th of January,



1707. He resided there till his death on the 25th December, 1718.

The congregation thus left vacant chose the son as successor to the father, and on the 10th of February, 1720, JOHN MEARS, junior, was ordained by the Presbytery of Down as minister of Newtownards. He entered the Synod at the time when the Non-subscription Controversy broke out, and, as might be expected from the baleful influence of Professor Simson, who directed his theological studies at the University of Glasgow, his sympathies were entirely on the side of those who wished to shake themselves free of the Confession of Faith. The young man, indeed, was in the habit of speaking so freely on the subject, that some suspected him of holding more advanced opinions on doctrinal subjects than other Non-subscribers. His objections to subscribing tests of religious orthodoxy, however, appear to have applied to the Westminster Confession only, certainly not to the Thirty-nine Articles and Book of Common Prayer; for in 1722 he made overtures to the Bishop of Down for joining the Established Church. When the Presbytery called him to account for this proceeding, he professed hearty repentance, and asked forgiveness, first of God, and then of his Presbytery and congregation, for what he called "his temptation of Satan."

When Gilbert Kennedy (see ch. xxxi.) published his *Defence of the Synod*, he inserted various statements, which at the time were understood to have been made by Mears, the tendency of which was to compromise his character for orthodoxy. The minister of Newtownards seems to have been indiscreet in his private conversation, and in the heat of controversy Kennedy forgot himself so far as to quote these loose remarks, which he should not have deigned to notice. The matter made such a noise, that Mr. Mears found it necessary to draw up and read to his congregation a paper, which, notwithstanding the strong assertions that it contained of his orthodoxy, did not satisfy them so generally as to prevent a considerable secession from his flock. An

abridgment of this document, prepared by the author himself, is inserted in Haliday's *Letter to Gilbert Kennedy*, an extract from which is appended to this notice.

Mears was acting as clerk of the Presbytery of Down, at the time when Mr. Nevin of Downpatrick was excluded from the Synod. At the first meeting of Presbytery held afterwards, he omitted the name of Mr. Nevin; but when taken to task for this by some of the non-subscribing ministers, he assigned as his reason that Mr. Nevin was not present. This implied, of course, that if he had been present the clerk would have called his name, in disregard of the sentence of exclusion pronounced by the Synod. This led to a discussion, and at the next meeting another clerk was appointed in his room. Two years later his own exclusion followed, in common with the members of the Presbytery of Antrim, to which he had in the meantime been added.

His *Catechism*, designed to instruct adults in a knowledge of the Christian religion, was published in 1732. It is divided into three parts, the first treating of religion in general, and of the evidences of Christianity; the second, of the main articles of the faith as expressed in the Apostles' Creed; and the third, of the moral duties as embodied in the ten commandments. The work has often been reprinted since. But in 1818, the Presbytery of Antrim published a revised edition. The nature of that revision may be seen from an extract, which we give on the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. The work of revision is done so well, that very little which is distinctive remains. It shows the almost irresistible tendency that there is in ecclesiastical bodies to let go the faith by degrees, if the first firm hold of it is slackened. At the end of eighty-six years, the Presbytery of Antrim quietly drop out of the book, in order to adapt it to their people, much that one of their own founders considered essential to Christianity, and therefore inserted in his first edition.

In 1735 Mr. Mears removed from Newtownards to Clonmel, where he succeeded the Rev. William Jackson.



Of his experience in the South, so far removed from association with his Northern friends, we know nothing; it is known, however, that in 1738 there were from seventy to eighty communicants in the church over which he presided. On the 9th of January, 1740, he was appointed to be minister of the congregation of Stafford Street, Dublin, a small section which in 1738 had separated from Capel Street on the death of Mr. Craghead (see ch. xxiv.). In the end of the year in which he came to Dublin, he preached, and subsequently published, a funeral sermon for the Rev. John Abernethy, the minister of Wood Street. The text is Matt. xxv. 21, and the subject "The reward of the faithful servant." This reward consists in being perfectly free from all evil, whether natural or moral; in being perfectly virtuous and holy, and possessed of everything that tends to perfect our nature, and is the perfect assurance that this blessed state shall never have an end. From these, as the heads of his discourse, he draws some practical lessons, and ends with a description of the character of Abernethy, but gives no biographical details. It is, on the whole, a commonplace sermon, manifesting no great ability of any kind.

His *Explanation of the Lord's Supper* was published in 1758, with the design of exhibiting the nature and object of that ordinance, and to supply suitable meditations and prayers for making its observance profitable. It is throughout a devotional and practical treatise.

His congregation in Dublin does not seem to have been prosperous; for in 1762 Mr. Mears and his people judged it expedient to coalesce with the congregation of Wood Street, which, since the death of Dr. Duchal in the previous year, was in sole charge of the Rev. Samuel Bruce, son of his old friend and neighbour, the Rev. Michael Bruce of Holywood (see ch. xxxix.). He and Bruce thus became colleagues in the one congregation. When the people of Wood Street built their new church in Strand Street, Mr. Mears preached the first sermon in the new edifice on the 22d of January, 1764.

He died soon after, on the 11th of October, 1767. Dr. Armstrong mentions that he left a son, who settled at Calcutta, and a daughter who married the Rev. Mr. Brown, minister of Waterford. In *Forms of Devotion*, which was published by the ministers of Dublin, Leland, Duchal, and Weld have their names joined with his in the authorship, but I am not aware that Mears is responsible for any part of it except the part taken out of his *Explanation of the Supper*.\*

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#### ASSERTION OF HIS ORTHODOXY.

MY BRETHREN,—It is now above four years since I have laboured amongst you as your fixed pastor, and I have, in my course of lecturing on the Lord's Day mornings, gone through the four Gospels, and have almost finished the Acts of the Holy Apostles; and I appeal to you, who have been my constant hearers, and to those likewise who formerly were my hearers, but have now left me, if I have not taken notice of such arguments as those portions of Holy Scriptures afford us for the Divinity of our blessed Saviour, and endeavoured, as well as I was able, to set the strength and force of them before you. I have likewise, at several different times, preached directly and professedly upon that subject. In August, 1722, I preached two Lord's Days together upon that point, and in one of these sermons, stating the notion of Christ's Divinity, I expressed myself in the very words of the Nicene Creed, which was composed directly against the Arians, viz., "That our Lord Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made." And a little after, in the same sermon, I used these words, "When we say, then, that the Son is God, you are to understand that He has all the same Divine perfection that the Father has, and is in all things equal to Him, excepting that which is the peculiar and distinguishing property of the Father—the *το ἀγεννητον*, as the Greeks express it—that is to say, His being unbegotten, or, as it is very well expressed in our Confession of Faith, His being of none, neither begotten nor proceeding, whereas the Son is eternally begotten of the Father. Thus, for instance, is the Father eternal? So is the Son, there being no time when He was not, and consequently He has no beginning. Is the Father everywhere present? So is the Son; and so of the rest of the Divine perfections, still excepting that peculiar pro-

\* MS. *Minutes* of the Synod of Ulster: Reid's *History* and MS. *Catalogue*: Armstrong's *Sketches*.

perty of the Father mentioned above, viz., which to ascribe to the Son would be to make Him the Father."

Again, no longer ago than last month, I preached on the same subjects three Lord's Days. One of the sermons was from Rom. ix. 5, "Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen." And the proposition I laid down to be proved was this: "That as our Lord Jesus Christ is really and truly man, of the stock of Israel and the offspring of David according to the flesh, so He is likewise really and truly God, supreme over all, and possessed of uncreated Divine perfections." The Lord's Day following I continued to preach on the same subject from Col. ii. 9, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," which words I explained thus: "By the fulness of the Godhead we can understand nothing else than the perfections of the Divine nature. By saying that the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in Christ, the Apostle means that Christ is possessed of all Divine perfections, and that the Divine nature resides in Him and abides with Him; and when he says that it dwells in Him bodily, the meaning, I think, is really and truly that the Deity displayed Himself to mankind in our Lord Jesus Christ in a much more glorious and effectual manner than He ever did to the Patriarchs of the Jewish Church while He was said to dwell in their Tabernacle or Temple. The whole can import no less than that He is truly God as well as man, that all Divine perfections belong to Him, and that, in a word, He has everything that the Father hath, except His being the Father."—*Letter in Haliday's Answer to Kennedy*, pp. 60–62.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

(From Mear's *Catechism*, Edition of 1741, p. 23).

*What do the Scriptures teach us concerning Him?*

*Ans.*—Concerning the Holy Ghost, the Scriptures teach us that He is the Spirit of God, and the Power of the Highest; that He is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, who proceedeth from the Father, and is sent by the Son; that He is present in the Churches, and dwelleth in all good Christians as in temples; that He searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, and knoweth them, even as the spirit of a man knoweth the things of a man.\*

(From Mear's *Catechism* as revised by the Presbytery of Antrim, Edition of 1818.

[Omitted.]

\* A great variety of proof-texts are here added, which, for want of space, we omit.—T. W.

He is also represented as receiving all things from the Father and the Son, and having all things in common with them ; and He is joined with them in the form of Baptism, and in the solemn apostolical Benediction.

*What are the offices of the Holy Spirit ?*

*Ans.*—The offices of the Holy Spirit are represented in Scripture to be such as these : that He inspired the ancient prophets, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ; that by His miraculous influence a body was prepared for the Son in the womb of the Virgin Mary ; that He was the guide of Christ during His state of humiliation, for He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and God gave not the Spirit unto Him by measure ; that He descended on the Apostles at the Feast of Pentecost by His miraculous gifts, by which they were qualified to be our Saviour's witnesses to the ends of the earth, and to publish his religion to the world both by preaching and writing ; that He is the sanctifier of all good Christians, assists them in well-doing, fortifies them against temptations, and guides them in the paths of piety and virtue ; for which reason, partly, the title *Holy* is peculiarly given to Him.

*Have we any promise in Scripture of assistance from the Holy Spirit for the purposes of repentance and new obedience ?*

*Ans.*—The assistances of the Holy Spirit for the purposes of faith, repentance, and new obedience, are promised to us in many places of Scripture, but particularly in these words of our Saviour, recorded by St. Luke xi. 13, "How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." See to the same purpose, Ezek. xi. 19, &c.

[Omitted.]

*Have we any promise in Scripture of assistance from the Holy Spirit for the purposes of repentance and new obedience ?*

A.—The assistance of the Holy Spirit for purposes of faith, repentance, and new obedience is promised to us in many places of Scripture, but particularly in these words of our Saviour, "How much more shall our Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

*How is it that the Spirit of God sanctifies our hearts and assists us in the practice of holiness and virtue?*

*Ans.*—The Spirit of God sanctifies our hearts, and assists us in the practice of holiness and virtue, by enlightening our minds and fixing our attention on the motives of religion, and thereby inclining us to the love and practice of it. But in what particular manner the Spirit of God works on our minds we cannot tell; it is so secret, and so perfectly consistent with our reasonable natures, that we cannot distinguish it from the natural working of our own minds; insomuch that we should not have known that we had Divine assistance in our good and virtuous actions if we had not been informed of it in the Word of God.

*Is not this promise of assistance from the Spirit of God, for the purposes of holiness and virtue, a great motive and encouragement to it?*

*Ans.*—This promise of Divine assistance is a very powerful motive, and a great encouragement to virtue and holiness to such imperfect creatures as we are; for we are hereby assured that our endeavours to subdue our evil habits and conform ourselves to the laws of the Gospel shall not be in vain, but shall be crowned with success.

*How is it that the Spirit of God sanctifies our hearts and assists us in the practice of holiness and virtue?*

*A.*—The Spirit of God sanctifies our hearts, and assists us in the practice of holiness and virtue, by enlightening our minds and fixing our attention on the motives of religion, and thereby inclining us to the love and practice of it.

*Is not this promise of assistance from the Spirit of God a great motive and encouragement to holiness and virtue?*

*A.*—The promise of Divine assistance is a very powerful motive, and a great encouragement to virtue and holiness to such imperfect creatures as we are; for we are hereby assured that our endeavours to subdue our evil habits and conform to the laws of the Gospel shall not be in vain, but shall be crowned with success.

## CHAPTER LVI.

ARCHIBALD MACLAINE, JUNIOR, M.A.,  
(1720—1740),

MINISTER OF BANBRIDGE.

A *Sermon* occasioned by the death of the Rev. Mr. Robert Rainey, preached at Newry, September the 19th, 1736, and published at the desire of the Congregation. 12mo, pp. 38. *Belfast*, 1736. M. C. D.

THE father of the subject of this sketch was the Rev. Archibald Maclaine, senior, minister of Markethill, in the Co. Armagh (1703–1734). Three of his sons entered the ministry. His son Thomas was minister of Monaghan (1718–1740), and father of Dr. Maclaine, the translator of Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*. Another son, Alexander, became successively minister of Ballynahinch and Antrim. A third son is the subject of this notice.

The people of Banbridge had originally formed a part of the congregation of Magherally, but in 1717 they formed themselves into a separate congregation, built a church, and chose a minister of their own. That minister was Mr. ARCHIBALD MACLAINE, junior. He was ordained at Banbridge on the 26th of April, 1720.

His only publication is his funeral sermon for the Rev. Robert Rainey of Newry (1706–1736). The text is Acts xiii. 36, "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep," &c. On such a hackneyed subject it is difficult to say anything that is not familiar, and Maclaine does not attempt it.



The discourse is plain, the thoughts trite, the style mediocre; but it is a fair specimen of the sober and moderate preaching of the Synod of Ulster, in that dull period between the exit of the Non-subscribers and the advent of the Secession.

Mr. MacLaine died early, after a ministry of sixteen years, on the 23d of February, 1740. His own funeral sermon was preached by his friend, the Rev. James Moody of Newry, and is noticed in connection with our account of that minister (see ch. lviii.). He speaks of MacLaine as "distinguished for manly and unaffected piety," and as "remarkable for candour and sincerity" as any man he ever knew. He describes him as "an affectionate husband, a tender parent, a gentle master, and an obliging neighbour." He says that he was a man of good abilities, which he carefully cultivated, and of intellectual accomplishments; and that as he allowed no man to judge for him in matters of religion, he was always willing to extend to others the same privileges which he claimed for himself.

These were the usual terms of encomium in which, at that day, one minister who felt hampered by a creed usually spoke of another who entertained similar sentiments. I infer, therefore, that Mr. MacLaine's sympathies were with the non-evangelical school in the Synod. For it must not be supposed, that the Presbytery of Antrim carried with it out of the Synod everything that was cold and rationalistic and sceptical. From this time forward evidence of the contrary is appearing constantly. Against the non-evangelical spirit, which throughout the whole century and down till 1829 had its representatives and friends in the Synod, the formation of the Secession Church was a protest and a reaction. No doubt, in the very darkest hour of this mediæval period friends were never wanting to the truth and the Gospel, but still the tide ran in the other direction, and for a whole century the tone and spirit which the Presbytery left behind after its departure were working an amount of mischief, which the Seceders, even when they had put forth their utmost



efforts, were scarcely able to counteract. A child can do more harm in a few minutes than a giant could repair in a century.\*

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#### CHARACTER OF MR. RAINEY OF NEWRY.

His sentiments concerning the nature, design, and tendency of the Christian religion, were exceeding just. For he well understood that it was calculated to increase our knowledge and to enlarge our love and charity, and by them to raise our nature to such degrees of happiness and glory as we are capable of. And I can appeal to yourselves whether, in the whole course of his public ministrations, he did not chiefly insist upon the great and important subjects in religion, love to God and love to our neighbour—whether that faith in Christ which works by love, and that repentance toward God which is productive of a good life, were not the ordinary, the principal subjects of his discourses. These he looked upon as of the greatest importance to the peace and comfort and happiness of you, his hearers. He did not amuse you with vain and airy speculations about matters too high for us, too high for the human mind in this state of imperfection to understand. On the contrary, he always made a distinction between those things that are of the greatest moment in religion, which all Christians are bound to regard, and those lesser points with respect to which we are commended to bear with one another in a diversity of sentiments.

And in consequence hereof, though he discovered a commendable Christian zeal for the faith “as it was once delivered to the saints,” yet he had too much goodness in his temper to carry it with shyness and reserve to those who might happen to differ with him in matters that do not affect the vitals of religion. His generous soul was far above that stiffness and bigotry, which always tarnish the reputation of men that are otherwise deserving of our esteem. He knew too well the weakness of the human nature and the prejudices it is subject to, to judge hastily with respect to those who differed from him, either as to their sincerity in their searches after truth, or as to their title to the favour of God. Indeed, he loved all those who made a credible profession of their loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, notwithstanding their differing from him in opinion or in modes of worship.

This made him greatly bewail some animosities that happened among his brethren about matters of doubtful disputation. Not so much because there was a diversity of opinion; for this he

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod*: Reid's MS. *Catalogue*: Moody's *Funeral Sermon* for Maclaine.

knew was not to be avoided in a state in which we know but in part, but chiefly because of the manner in which these differences were managed. And he would often, of late, comfort himself with the hopes of being soon in a better place, where the blessed inhabitants never look upon one another with a jealous or envious eye, never give way to suspicion or mistrust, to peevish contentions or angry debates. Indeed, he appeared to be in a particular manner fitted for such society.—*Funeral Sermon*, pp. 31-33.

## CHAPTER LVII.

SAMUEL DELAP, M.A. (1707—1762),

MINISTER OF LETTERKENNY.

1. *Synodical Sermon* at Antrim, June 21st, 1737, from Romans xiv. 1, and Titus iii. 10, 11. pp. 36, 12mo. *Belfast*, 1737. M. C. D.
2. The Scriptural doctrine of *Original Sin* asserted and explained. [Isaiah viii. 20.] A Sermon preached the second Lord's Day of July, A.D. 1740. 12mo, pp. 26. *Londonderry*, 1741. M. C. D.
3. The Sin and Folly of making a *New Captain* to return to Rome. A Sermon preached on the Public Fast, December 18, 1745. [Numb. xiv. 4, 9.] 18mo, pp. 24. *Dublin*, 1746. A. C. B.
4. *The Deliverance* of Great Britain and Ireland from Popery, Slavery, and the Pretender. A Sermon preached on October 9th, 1746, being the Thanksgiving Day for our deliverance from the late wicked and unnatural rebellion. [Judges xx. 18—35.] 12mo, pp. 23. *Dublin*, 1746. M. C. D.
5. *Remarks* on some Articles of the Seceders' New Covenant and their Act of Presbytery making it the term of Ministerial and Christian Communion. 1st Ed. pp. 42; 2d Ed. pp. 40. *Belfast*, 1749. M. C. D.
6. A *Dissertation* on the important subject of Atonement. [Lev. i. 4, and Eph. v. 2.] 12mo, pp. 51. *Dublin*, 1758. M. C. D.

THE great-grandfather of SAMUEL DELAP was Allen Delap of Irvine, in Ayrshire. He married a Miss Montgomery, by whom he had six daughters and one son, named Hugh.

This Hugh Delap appears to have been the first of the family who settled in Ireland. He married a Miss Aikin, and after his marriage he left Scotland, made his

way across the Channel, and set up in business in the town of Sligo. In due time, when he had a home fit for her reception, his wife, who is described as a woman of very small stature, followed him to Ireland, but in making her way over the Donegal mountains was robbed in passing through the Gap of Barnesmore. The Delaps were among the first Protestants who settled in Sligo. For years their children remained unbaptized, there being no Protestant minister in the place; but at last one named Roecroft arrived, by whom the rite was administered. Two days before the Irish massacre of 1641, Lord Taffe sent for the family and brought them to Ballymote—an event which, in all probability, was the means of preserving their lives.

Hugh Delap left a son named Robert, who married Jane Murray, and who lived as a merchant successively at Sligo, Manorhamilton, and Ballyshannon.

His son was also called Robert. He was a merchant in Ballyshannon, and by his wife, Anne Lindsay, became father of the subject of the present sketch.\*

Samuel Delap, the great-great-grandson of Allen Delap of Irvine, and afterwards the minister of Letterkenny, is said to have been born about 1680. In 1706 he was licensed by the Presbytery of Derry, and was subsequently ordained by the same Presbytery at Letterkenny on the 13th of August, 1707. The year after his settlement there he married Sarah Campbell, daughter of the Rev. Robert Campbell of Ray (see ch. xii.), an estimable woman, who was the companion of his life for fifty-four years. She survived him only for a fortnight, as she died on the 13th of September, 1762, at the age of seventy-seven. Tradition tells that this worthy couple kept a dairy outside of and adjacent to the town of Letterkenny, and, as Dr. Kinnear humorously puts it, dispensed to the villagers—for it was but a village then—the milk of the kine all the week through, and the milk of the Word on the Sabbath—a fact of no

\* This history of the Delaps is derived from a copy of a document in the handwriting of the Rev. Samuel Delap, made by the Rev. Dr. Kinnear of Letterkenny.

more discredit to the worthy pastor than it was to Paul that while he was making sermons he made tents also.

Mr. Delap was one of the evangelical succession in the Synod, whose views of Gospel truth were acquired from the old orthodox fathers of the previous century, before non-subscription and moderation had risen to the position of principles, and who transmitted their piety and their orthodoxy down to later generations. He himself is evidence that even in the coldest and most degenerate period, between the close of the Non-subscription Controversy and the arrival of the Seceding preachers, the light of the Gospel, however dim, had not been extinguished in the Synod of Ulster. His moral character and soundness of judgment won the respect of his brethren, as is shown by the fact that on the 15th of June, 1736, he was chosen as Moderator to preside over their deliberations at Dungannon. This gave him the opportunity, when resigning office in the following year, to address his brethren, and he did so in an able and orthodox discourse, which was subsequently published. In the Non-subscription Controversy hitherto he had taken no part, whether owing to the modesty of youth or reluctance to appear in print, or more likely to the sphere of his labours being far removed from the centre and heat of the conflict; but the agitation left behind by the struggle had not yet subsided, and the discourse suggests what a powerful antagonist he would have been, had he chosen to enter the field when the battle was at its height.

Encouraged, perhaps, by the acceptance which his Synodical sermon had received, Mr. Delap from this time forward addressed the public frequently through the medium of the press. Two of his sermons were occasioned by the rising of the Highlands in 1745 in favour of Prince Charles Stuart, and which for a time caused serious alarm to all Protestants in the kingdom. One of these was preached on the 18th of December in that year, on the occasion of a public fast appointed at a time when the interests of the House of Hanover and of the Protestant succession were in great jeopardy.

When the day for its observance came, the Pretender was already in retreat from England, and the Duke of Cumberland following hard behind. But the news of the pursuit had not as yet reached Letterkenny, and the sermon was preached at a time when, so far as the preacher could see, there was every prospect of a successful rebellion, and when the hopes of the Romish party ran high, in expectation that the grandson of James II. would soon be seated on the throne of his ancestors. The other was a thanksgiving sermon, preached after the rebellion was at an end, and the last hopes of the Stuarts had been shattered on the field of Culloden. Both sermons have caught up and preserved the universal sentiment of the Presbyterians of Ireland at that time—first, dread that the persecuting Stuarts might perhaps regain the crown, and afterwards overflowing joy when the victory of the House of Hanover was complete. To some of the political and religious aspects of our own time, the first of these sermons is not judged altogether inapplicable; and within the last few years the ministers of Letterkenny have read to their congregations with great acceptance this sermon, preached more than a hundred years ago by their old minister to the great-great-grandfathers of the present generation.

When the Synod of Ulster was at the lowest point in regard to doctrinal orthodoxy and to spiritual life, the followers of the Erskines made their appearance in Ulster, and as these preachers could establish congregations nowhere except by dividing the flocks of the Synod, their appearance in any neighbourhood was always sure to excite opposition and controversy. The differences at Ray, near Letterkenny, consequent on the removal of the Rev. William Laird in 1747 to become assistant to Mr. Mastertown (see ch. xxxv.) in the Third Congregation of Belfast, gave the Seceders the opportunity which they sought of forming a new settlement in a rich and thickly inhabited Presbyterian district. That opportunity they were not slow to embrace. Good men did not see then what was to come out of these



things, and the plan of Divine Providence for keeping alive and strengthening the truth in Ireland was a mystery to them. All they saw was the evil and the distractions and bad feeling, which this intervention produced at the time. Mr. Delap wielded a ready and able pen, as the public by this time were well aware, and in a pamphlet which he published in 1749 he warned his neighbours against the new sect which had come to disturb their quiet. But it was found much more easy to bring the Seceders in, than, after they had got in, to drive them away; and so they kept their ground at Ray in defiance of the efforts of their polemical neighbour, the worthy pastor of Letterkenny.

Perhaps it was the opposition which he gave them on this occasion, that tempted the Seceders afterwards to take a piece of legitimate, though not, perhaps, altogether unmalicious revenge. In his fast-day sermon of 1745 Mr. Delap had mentioned, among other causes of humiliation, social and ecclesiastical, the fact that some persons professing to be ministers of the Gospel did not maintain the worship of God in their families. This, if true, it was right enough to state as a ground of humiliation before God; but, whether true or otherwise, it does not wear a pleasant appearance when stated as a charge by a minister against his brethren. The Seceders, as was natural enough, seized on this passage of the printed sermon, and quoted it in proof of their common allegation, that some ministers of the Synod were irreligious men; for if the statement did not refer to ministers of the Synod, why, it might be asked fairly enough, should one of their number mention it as a ground of humiliation? Dr. Clark of Cahans, in his *Brief Survey*, published in 1751, cited this passage of the sermon by way of confirming his statement as to the want of piety prevalent among the ministers of the General Synod. The tendency of this was in some degree to compromise Mr. Delap with his brethren. Not being able to attend the meeting of Synod that year, he authorised his neighbour, the Rev. William Boyd of Monreagh (see ch. li.), to state pub-

liely that he did not mean in his sermon to cast any reflection on the ministers of the Synod of Ulster, for he did not know any of them guilty of such sinful practices. This was the direct way of getting clear of the difficulty. But the moral is, that when we confess sins to God, it should always be our own sins, and not the sins of our neighbours.

The ablest of Mr. Delap's treatises we have reserved to the close. These are his discourse on *Original Sin*, and his *Dissertation on the Atonement*. They are works of no common talent and power, explaining the orthodox doctrine regarding these subjects, and defending it with metaphysical acumen and logical skill. That on the *Atonement* is a particularly able treatise, presenting the Scriptural view very clearly, and answering the Socinian objections. It is the fullest exposition of the grand central doctrine of the Christian system which had yet been published by any Presbyterian minister in Ireland, and in the short space which he allows to himself he does for the Atonement, what Mastertown's work had done for the doctrine of the Trinity.

Mr. Delap was one of the seven ministers of the Synod, who, in 1711, were declared competent to preach the Gospel in Irish, but to what extent he employed this talent is not now known. After a long and useful ministry, he died on the 30th of August, 1762, and was buried in the churchyard of Letterkenny. Old people were living some years ago, who spoke with other old people that saw and heard him. The tradition which they have transmitted is that he was a most respectable minister, both an able and a good man.

A daughter of Mr. Delap married the Rev. Robert Caldwell, minister of Donegal, Ballyshannon, and Belleek (1767-1790). The only daughter of this clergyman married Dr. Crawford of Ballyshannon, to whom she brought considerable property. Their son, Samuel Crawford, Esq., solicitor, of Ballyshannon, was instrumental in reorganising the congregation of his native town when their old meeting-house had fallen into decay, and in establishing it in 1834 as a separate

congregation. He is also the author of *The Bane and Antidote*, an interesting and useful treatise in support of the Temperance Reformation, published in 1869. This Ballyshannon family, inheriting the principles of their honoured ancestor, some years ago erected a monument over his grave in Letterkenny, and thus have marked with their affection the last resting-place of one of the worthiest ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. A man's true representatives in the world are not those who happen to inherit his name, but those to whom his name and character and principles are dear.\*

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#### FUNDAMENTAL ARTICLES OF CHRISTIANITY.

By fundamental articles I understand such doctrines without the knowledge and belief of which a man can't be a true Christian, nor in the ordinary method of grace entitled to the promises of salvation made to penitent believers in the Gospel.

The Christian religion comprehends the whole revelation God hath given to the Church ; more especially those first principles which, like a foundation, support the other doctrines.

As, for instance, the doctrines of the existence of a God, an infinitely perfect Being, the Creator of all things, and of His providence governing the world, which Christianity adopts from the light of nature : that God has given a revelation of Himself and the way of salvation to man : that in the unity of the God-head there are three, represented by personal characters, and distinguished by the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost : that these three are one God, in whose name baptism is to be administered : that God made man holy, but that we are now in a sinful, wretched state by nature : that Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is the Word, which in the beginning was with God, and was God, and was made flesh : that He is the Son of God and Son of Man, Emanuel—God with us—the true Messiah and promised seed of the Virgin, the great Prophet, Priest, and King of His Church, who has bruised the head of the serpent : that He died not for Himself, but laid down His life on the cross for the sins of His people : that His precious blood is a propitiation for their sins and price of their redemption : that He rose for their justification : that no man is justified in the sight of God by the merit or

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod* : Delap's *Works* : Semple's *Survey* : Clark's *Brief Survey* : MS. *Letters* of Rev. Dr. Kinnear and of Rev. Andrew Lowry, Ballyshannon.

price of his own righteousness, which is by the law, but by the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Christ: that He ascended into heaven, and will come to judge the world at the resurrection of the dead, when the wicked shall be sentenced into hell, and the righteous received to a life of eternal glory. Moreover, the Christian faith comprehends in it the doctrine of repentance from dead works, and the doctrine of godliness contained in the essential precepts of the Moral Law, which are adopted into the Christian doctrine, together with the doctrine of Gospel sacraments and discipline.

These articles seem to me included in the principles of the doctrine of Christ mentioned in Heb. vi. 1, 2, or deducible from them. A person who makes a serious profession of such a summary of Christian doctrine, and does not contradict it by habitual scandalous enormities, or by heresy that plainly subverts it, in my humble opinion is entitled to the character of being a disciple of Christ, and has a right to the sacraments that are badges of the Christian profession. I don't say that every one of the preceding articles is essential to the being of a Christian, though the greater part of them appear to me to be so.—*Synodical Sermon*, pp. 24–26.

#### THE BATTLE OF CULLODEN.

From what accounts we have of the battle, the number of the rebels was greater than that of the King's army. They were flushed with their former success and situation in the midst of their friends, behind walls and fences; but it appears His Majesty's forces were better disciplined and conducted. Divine Providence gives every bullet its billet; the cannon of the rebels were ill-pointed, but our artillery was so well directed as to make great slaughter among the enemy: they trusted to sword and target, and were destroyed by ball and bayonet. The number of the slain and wounded on the King's side was but a few hundred, but some thousands of the rebels were slain and taken prisoners. Some of their chiefs have been already executed by legal trial, and many more of different ranks lie in prison, under power of the law and mercy of the Government.

It is said that His Royal Highness, the Duke, standing among the slain on the field of battle, expressed himself in this devout ejaculation, "Lord! what am I that I should be spared when so many brave men lie dead on the spot!" This is particular ground of thanksgiving to us that God not only preserved His Majesty's life at Dettingen, but His Royal Highness the Duke's life there, at Fontenoy, and at Culloden.

Moreover, we ought to consider the happy consequences of that glorious victory. It contributes to establish more firmly the Protestant succession which the rebellion intended to overturn. It adds new laurels to the triumphs of Derry, Inniskillen, Dumbane, and Preston. It has secured the lives of many loyal sub-

jects who would have been in danger. Had victory declared in favour of the rebels, what a scene of blood and confusion would then have followed? The number of the rebels would probably have greatly increased by hidden Jacobites, who now cover themselves with a mask of loyalty. If victory that day had favoured the rebels, it is hard to know what would have followed; but this we may know, not merely by conjecture, as a possible, probable, remote consequence, but assuredly by immediate necessary consequence, founded on the principles of Popery and melancholy experience of Protestants under Popish powers, that if God, for our sins, had given us a Popish king in His wrath, French tyranny, Popery, and slavery, would have come in like a deluge; all which the kind providence of God has prevented by the happy success of His Majesty's arms.—*The Deliverance*, pp. 20–22.

#### THE NEED OF AN ATONEMENT.

The mercy of God shineth brightly in the pardon of sin; but it is not the method of God's providence to glorify one attribute at the expense of another. High contemplations of God's mercy should not make us forget or disregard His justice. Divine justice is not an arbitrary constitution; it is an essential attribute of God, that rendereth to every one what is due. It is founded both in the dominion and rectitude of the Divine nature. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Justice calls for vengeance on the objects of Divine hatred. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord; I will repay." It cannot therefore be agreeable to the purity and justice of God to pardon sin and receive sinners to glory without an atonement, that might manifest His hatred at sin and glorify His justice in punishing it.

The majesty of God, the honour of His law, and authority of His government make an atonement necessary. Every law of God is worthy of our obedience: every transgression is an indignity offered to the law and authority of the Lawgiver. Now the sanction of the law saith, the sinner shall die; if no ransom could be found to satisfy justice, it naturally followeth that the Divine veracity must fail, or all sinners perish under the threatening like fallen angels. If sinners were pardoned and received to heaven without an atonement, this would open a door to licentiousness, and encourage a presumptuous confidence in mercy with contempt of the law (Deut. xxix. 19). Impunity occasions contempt of the law (Eccl. viii. 11). If wicked men take such encouragement in sin from a delay in the execution of judgment, to what degrees of licentiousness would men proceed if pardon and glory were preached and promised to the world without a suitable alarming sacrifice of atonement. The first snare wherein Satan caught our first parents was, "Ye shall not surely die." Some Socinians own that it is inconsistent with the wisdom and holiness of God's government to forgive sin and receive the sinner to favour without



repentance ; the same may be said of forgiving and receiving without a propitiatory sacrifice. It is not agreeable to the wisdom or goodness of God to inflict penal evil where there is no moral evil, personal or imputed ; neither is it fit that moral evil should wholly escape punishment without an atonement, to vindicate the authority of God's law and government.

There are two things to be considered in sin—the dishonour done to God by the breach of His law, and the punishment that sin deserveth. Pardoning the sin has a respect to the sinner, and it is free grace to him when the penalty of the law is forgiven him. But shall not God be free to vindicate the honour of His law and government, and to declare His righteousness and justice to the world, at the same time that He justifieth the believing sinner? Common sense teacheth that, in case of defamation, men are bound to vindicate themselves, though they freely forgive the slanderer. Why, then, should it be reckoned inconsistent with free grace that God should require an atoning sacrifice to vindicate the honour of His law and government, and in order to let the world see it is no such easy thing, as many imagine, to obtain pardon of sin ; and consequently, when we plead for pardon for Christ's sake, that we should look upon His bitter sufferings as a most powerful argument to make us loath sin with a perfect hatred, as the procuring cause of the cursed death and bitter sufferings of our compassionate Saviour?

The Gospel teacheth that the Holy Jesus died a shameful death on the cross. Who can imagine that God would give up His only beloved Son to that cursed death if some indispensable necessity had not required it? No reason can be assigned for His death of such importance as this, that He gave Himself a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice and redeem His Church. This is the reason given Rom. iii. 25.—*Dissertation*, pp. 13-15.



## CHAPTER LVIII.

*JAMES MOODY (1734—1779),*

## MINISTER OF MAGHERALLY AND NEWRY.

1. A *Sermon* on the death of the Rev. Mr. Archibald Maclaine, preached at Banbridge, March 2d, 1740. [John v. 28, 29.] pp. 30. *Belfast*, 1740. A. C. B.
2. A *Sermon* occasioned by the death of the Rev. George Lang, preached at the Meeting-house of Loughbrickland, June 14, 1741. pp. 24. *Belfast*, 1741. A. C. B.
3. A *Sermon* occasioned by the present Rebellion in Scotland, preached at Newry, October the 6th, 1745. [1 Cor. xvi. 13.] 12mo, pp. 19. *Belfast*, 1745. M. C. D.
4. A *Sermon* occasioned by the death of the late Rev. John Maxwell, preached at Armagh, the 25th of December, 1763. [Ps. xc. 12.] pp. 19. *Armagh*, 1764. A. C. B.

JAMES MOODY was ordained as minister of Magherally near Loughbrickland on the 8th of May, 1734.

In 1740 he received a call to the congregation of Newry, which, since the death of Mr. Rainey (see ch. lvi.), had not been provided with a minister; but his installation was delayed in consequence of his refusing to renew his subscription to the Confession of Faith. In answer to a committee of Synod appointed to confer with him, he said that he held to subscribing principles, but scrupled to reaffirm the sentiments in regard to the extent of the civil magistrate's power contained in the twenty-third chapter. Had the Synod, true to its principles, set down its foot firmly on this occasion, and showed that it was not to be trifled with, let the consequences be what they might, and acted at all times consistently with what the majority of its members avowed and maintained, it would have saved itself

trouble, and delivered many of its congregations from heterodoxy, and avoided a second Disruption a century after the first; but the Synod fell into the usual temptation of compromise, and directed the Presbytery of Armagh to install him, some of them at the same time suspecting that the twenty-third was not the only chapter to which Mr. Moody took exception. For some reason the Presbytery does not appear to have acted on this instruction, and Mr. Moody officiated as minister of Newry till the time of his death without any formal installation. The suspicions that he was not sound in the faith were confirmed, if not produced, by the fact that he appeared among the Protestors in the case of Mr. Apriehard.

On the 6th of October, 1745, when Prince Charles and his Bluebonnets were crossing the Border to enter on their brief campaign in England, Moody preached a sermon at Newry, in which he gave forcible expression to the dread and horror, with which the Presbyterians regarded the attempt made in Scotland to restore the Stuarts. It is a spirited and well-written address.

He also published three funeral sermons, one in 1740, for Maclaine of Banbridge (see ch. lvi.), another for Lang of Loughbrickland (1701-1741), and the third for Maxwell of Armagh. The last of these is a clear and sensible, but frigid discourse, distinguished by the well-known characteristics of the New Light school.

Mr. Moody died on the 26th of May, 1779, and was succeeded in his office as minister of Newry by his son, the Rev. Boyle Moody.\*

#### CHARACTER OF LANG OF LOUGHBRICKLAND.

He was the worthy son of the Rev. Mr. George Lang, Dissenting minister of Newry, whose extraordinary piety and great industry in promoting practical religion are still remembered by some who lived under his ministry. His grandfather by the mother was the Rev. Mr. Bernard Sanderson, a worthy and much esteemed minister of the Church of Scotland. After he had made

\* Moody's *Works*: Killen's *History*: MS. *Minutes* of Synod.

good proficiency in the Latin and Greek languages in this kingdom, he applied himself to the study of philosophy and divinity in the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, in both which places he was esteemed for his good sense and unblamable behaviour. In the year 1700 he commenced a preacher, and on the 5th of April the following year was ordained pastor of the Protestant Dissenting congregation of Loughbrickland.

He was, indeed, an honour to his character. A constant serenity appeared in his countenance, the visible sign of the calm that was in his breast. He was facetious and pleasant without being in any degree offensive, and had too much humanity to put any one out of countenance by his pleasantry, which had nothing of levity in it, nothing unbecoming the gravity of a Gospel minister.

Candour and ingenuity shone remarkably in his whole behaviour. He knew not how to make specious professions of friendship in order to promote any selfish design or to gain the empty applause of flatterers. When his friends applied to him for assistance in any important affair, he never promised to do great things, but whenever he had an opportunity of serving them, they were sure that he would do more than he promised to do. The least hint concerning his intention to serve them was sufficient to engage them to depend on him. . . .

But the quality that shone brightest in him was his piety towards God. He had an habitual sense of religion upon his mind, and of him it may be truly said that "he walked with God." On all occasions he revered the Divine Providence, and having done his duty, left the issues and events of things to the wise Governor of the world. He had piety without superstition and that unnatural stiffness, which renders some men, who are otherwise truly good, less amiable. As he was remarkable for piety towards God, so he was very eminent for love to mankind. Of both these, his extraordinary diligence in fulfilling his ministry, in which he had no superior—scarcely an equal, is an abundant proof. The most of his time was spent in performing the duties of his function. His pulpit performances were solid and judicious, and well fitted to promote the design of religion. And no wonder, for his natural abilities were very considerable, and well improved by a liberal education. Above all, he had the interest of pure and undefiled religion truly at heart, and would not entertain his hearers with anything that would not make them wiser and better. He never polluted his pulpit by throwing out invectives against his brethren that happened to differ from him in some points of less importance. His charity to men and regard to the substantials of religion, employed him in much more desirable work. . . . On the 29th of May, 1741, he was translated into the regions of bliss, where the faithful servants of God "rest from their labours, and their works follow them."—*Funeral Sermon for Lang*, pp. 20–23.

## CHAPTER LIX.

JOHN CARLISLE, M.A. (1722—1748),

MINISTER OF CLOGHER.

*The Nature of Religious Zeal.* A Sermon on Phil. iii. 6, preached at a General Synod held at Antrim, June the 18th, 1745. 12mo, pp. 32. *Belfast*, 1745. C. P. L.

JOHN CARLISLE was ordained by the Presbytery of Augher as minister of Clogher, in the County Tyrone, on the 10th of January, 1722.

He was chosen Moderator of the Synod of Ulster in 1744. The Synodical sermon which he preached on retiring from office in the following year was not satisfactory to some of the evangelical party in the Synod, and the Seceders for years afterwards were in the habit of quoting several of its statements, with the view of justifying their position, and proving that there was a real necessity for their attempting to spread the truths of the Gospel in Ulster. An account of this production is given by Dr. Killen in his *History of the Presbyterian Church*,\* but the collection there made of nearly all the objectionable phrases which it contains, is calculated, I think, to leave an exaggerated impression of the defects and errors of a sermon, which notwithstanding all that can be fairly said against it, is an exceedingly able and useful discourse, very much superior, even in point of orthodoxy, to many of the Synodical sermons of the next half century.

From the case of Paul before and after conversion,

\* See vol. iii. p. 255.

he shows that zeal is a good or an evil thing, according as it is properly or improperly directed. The zeal which God approves, has for its *object* the search for truth and the practice of virtue; in its *manner* it must not be connected with unholy passions or unlawful means; and its *end* must be the glory of God, as exhibited in establishing Christ's kingdom in the world, in righteousness, truth, and love, in order to the salvation of men. Mistaken or misguided zeal, on the contrary, has for its object error, superstition, sectarian peculiarities, and party; in *degree* it is disproportioned to the good or evil about which it is employed, being more for externals than for essentials, for the traditions of men than for the commandments of God; it seeks its object usually by unlawful *methods*; and it is wrong in its *end* or intention. He improves the subject by urging his brethren to seek men's spiritual good by moral means only, to impose upon them no doctrine or practice that God has not enjoined, to keep pure and entire the religion of Christ, not to depreciate either reason or revelation at the expense of each other, and in every case to temper their zeal with moderation. He concludes by applying his subject more particularly to the circumstances of ministers and elders.

It is quite certain that Mr. Carlisle leant to the Non-subscription school, and there are various statements made in the sermon to which just exception may be taken, and was, indeed, taken at the time; such as when he undervalues different forms of Church policy and different creeds as being the "tithe of mint, anise, and cummin;" but, with these exceptions, there is very little in the sermon, as a whole, to deserve the strong terms of disapprobation which it has called down. It will appear from the extracts that the objections lay against the incidentals, rather than the main staple of the discourse.

Of the private history of Mr. Carlisle I have not been able to discover anything. He died on the 22d of May, 1748.\*

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod: Carlisle's Religious Zeal.*



## THE PREFACE.

Though I was warmly solicited by most of the ministers at the General Synod, by some of the gentlemen, and elders, and others, to publish the following sermon, they being of opinion that, as the obvious design of it was to recommend peace, meekness, and moderation in our whole behaviour, it might, by the blessing of God, do good in the world ; yet I had not the least intention of complying with their desire till an incident happened, which I judged made it necessary for me to do it, which was this :—Some few ministers, it seems, were dissatisfied with some expressions in the discourse, and in an interloquitur of the Synod desired that I might be asked to explain myself upon them. I, without insisting upon their not having spoken to me, first, in a private way, according to the Gospel rule, Matt. xviii. (which, indeed, one of them did, and owned publicly in the interloquitur that I at once satisfied him fully), desired them to point out the passages at which they had taken offence. Accordingly they pointed out two or three, which I read over to them, and showed them that they had mistaken my meaning, and, at the same time, explained the passages referred to (retaining still the obvious sense and sentiment contained in them) to their satisfaction, as will plainly appear by the minute of the interloquitur taken upon that occasion, and subscribed by the Moderator and clerk of the Synod, which is as follows :—

*“At an Interloquitur of the General Synod at Antrim,  
June 18th, 1745,*

“Some few brethren, who had taken exceptions at some expressions in Mr. Carlisle’s sermon, now desired that he would satisfy them ; they specified the passages which they looked on as offensive, and Mr. Carlisle condescended to read them, and gave such explications of them as were satisfying to those brethren and to this interloquitur.

*“Extracted by JOHN COCHRAN, Clk. S.G.  
JOHN MOOREHEAD, Moderator.”*

## ZEAL.

Zeal, therefore, is not a particular grace or virtue by itself, but rather a qualification, which should accompany the exercise of every virtue and the performance of every duty. Indeed, it is no virtue at all unless it be well placed and regulated. Zeal in its general notion is nothing else but a strong and ardent affection and concern for or against anything that a man values or dislikes, and a lively and vigorous manner of acting thereupon. It is in some measure wrought into the temper and constitution of every man, and is the natural heat and fervour of the mind when it is very earnest in any pursuit. Zeal, therefore, as all other passions,



is either good or bad according to its object, and as it is under the conduct of reason or human corruption. It has the denomination of a religious zeal only as far as the objects about which it is conversant are of a religious nature ; and even a religious zeal is no farther good and commendable than when it is really on the side of truth and goodness, when it is measured by the importance of things, and when it is expressed and exercised by lawful and regular methods. It is often spoken of in an evil sense ; it is reckoned among the works of the flesh, and often ranked in the worst of company, as in Gal. v. 20, and in many other places. And yet right zeal is a duty and a needful ingredient of the Christian temper, an excellent instrument of religion, and of promoting the honour and interest of God in the world. Gal. iv. 18. —*Sermon*, pp. 7, 8.

#### IRRELIGIOUS ZEAL.

It is a known maxim in religion, that we must not do evil that good may come of it. The most sacred end can never sanctify wicked means, and therefore, whenever any means are made use of to obtain the ends of zeal, which contradict any of the plain morals or duties of religion, such methods must be the effect of misguided zeal. Be our point, therefore, never so good or never so weighty, yet if we use any unlawful arts for the gaining of it, that is to say, if we do anything which is in itself evil, and appears to be so to the common sense of mankind, or which the laws of our holy religion do forbid ; in all such instances we are transgressors, and though our cause be very good and our ends very allowable, yet since the means by which we would accomplish those ends are unwarrantable, the whole affair, though proceeding from never so much zeal for God, is very bad. This, therefore, I take to be a sure mark whereby any man may try and discover the nature of his own or other people's zeal. Religion is a sacred thing, and when that or anything appertaining to it is the subject, men think themselves authorised, and even bound to defend it in the warmest manner, and so their zeal is apt to outstrip their judgment and degenerate into passion. This is frequently the case in religious disputes ; zeal is worked up into a vicious passion, and writings of controversy are stuffed with scurrility and abusive language ; the plain duties of truth and charity, of meekness and forbearance, of justice and candour, are set aside, and the eternal and immutable laws of God are broken, under pretence of promoting His glory. These are the effects of a false zeal ; but true zeal, as it always supposes a right information of judgment as to the matter of it, so likewise it supposes a man shall act in honest ways and endeavour to attain his end by lawful means.

That is a false zeal which is wrong in its end and intention. Some speculative men warmly pursue the discovery of truth, purely for the sake of knowledge, and inquire into religious truths,

as into mathematical problems, for the mere pleasure they take in the discovery. Others are zealous about religion for worldly ends and interests; they see it expedient for the present to show a good degree of zeal for such a party or such a point or principle, because they see it is popular so to do, and the only way to a livelihood, and to secure the applause and good liking of the people. Others are zealous with no other view but that they may get the better of the person or party they oppose, and promote the interest of the party they are attached to, or to gratify their pride or passion, or any personal quarrel or pique they may have conceived against others. But these are all base and low views; to name them is enough to expose them; and nothing can justify our zeal unless it be accompanied with a sincere view and intention to bring honour to the name and kingdom of God in the world, by the love of truth and practice of virtue and happiness to our own souls or the souls of other men.—*Sermon*, pp. 19, 20.

#### REASON AND REVELATION.

To imagine reason and revelation at variance with each other is the like absurdity as supposing the eye to see contrary to what the ear hears, or that God should make one sense or faculty to contradict another. For reason and revelation are the two great lights which God has given us, the two pillars upon which the Christian religion is built; take away either, and it falls to the ground. For, first, reason and the light of nature have a most considerable use in the ministry of the Gospel; for though the Gospel be revealed from heaven, and could never be discovered by all the efforts of human reason, yet it is the reason of man that must determine whether the evidence of its Divine original be clear and strong: it is reason, or the mind of man, that must judge whether such a doctrine be contained in the Gospel or may be justly deduced from it: it is the work of human reason to compare one Scripture with another, and to find out the true sense of any particular text by this means: and it is reason also which must give its sentence whether a doctrine which is pretended to be contained in Scripture be agreeable to the nature and perfections of God and to the eternal and unchangeable reasons and relations of things; for if it be not, then reason may pronounce that this doctrine is not from God, nor can be given us by Divine revelation. These, therefore, and many more admirable purposes does reason and the light of nature serve in revelation; so that it is so far from being wrong, that it is the duty of ministers at proper seasons to preach and explain the principles of natural religion, as the basis and foundation of all religion revealed, to enforce the duties of morality, to teach men to govern their appetites and passions by their reason, to bind the rules of virtue on the consciences of men by arguments drawn from reason and the light of nature.

Yet, in general, it is most safe and honourable for a minister of Christ to make the Gospel appear to be the reigning principle in his discourses, and to make his hearers see how gloriously it has improved the religion of nature. We must not, therefore, forget that we are ministers of Christ, employed to publish to men what God has revealed by His prophets and apostles, and by His Son Jesus, and not heathen philosophers, to teach the people merely what the light of nature unassisted can search out. We are teachers in the school of Christ and preachers of the New Testament, whose business it is to insist more at large on the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, for the honour of our Saviour and the good of souls ; for this reason, they are so largely insisted on by the holy writers, those noble patterns of our ministry. Those illustrious doctrines are big with a thousand duties both to God and man ; all the practices of faith and love, of repentance and universal holiness, flow from them by plain and easy deduction. We preach the Gospel in a very defective manner if we neglect either these doctrines, or the moral and divine duties that are deducible from them.—*Sermon*, pp. 25-27.

#### CONCLUSION.

I may venture, I think, without offence to any man, to say of subscription, which is only an appointment of men, and has in a great measure been the matter of our unhappy debates, what the Apostle Paul said of circumcision, which was an ordinance of God : "Circumcision," says he, "availeth nothing, and uncircumcision availeth nothing, but faith which worketh by love ;" or, as he elsewhere expresses it, but "keeping the commandments of God : " so may I say, subscription is nothing, and non-subscription is nothing, but a holy and virtuous life. For the minister that lives soberly, righteously, and godly, preaches well, and is sound in the faith, is accepted of God, and justly esteemed by all wise men, whether he subscribes or not ; and without these good qualities everything else signifies just nothing.

In the last place, and to conclude, let us all take care that our zeal be right in its object and end, and in the manner and degree in which it expresses itself, and then there is no danger of its being excessive. We can never exceed in our impartial inquiries into the will of God, nor in the practice of virtue and righteousness. The more zealous we are in this way, the better qualified we shall be to instruct and establish our hearers in the most important truths of the Gospel of Christ, to make them understanding Christians, and not bigots and uncharitable. The more zealous we are in ordering our own conversation aright, the greater efficacy we may expect our instructions, admonitions, and reproofs shall have upon those that want them ; for these Christian offices, these charitable expressions of zeal are always best accepted and most regarded, when they come recommended by a suitable example in ourselves.

Our zeal, therefore, being, as it ought to be, we can never be too ardent in the love of God and of the souls of men, never too active and industrious in his service, never too bold and resolute in a discreet defence of His truth and in vindication of His laws : we can never be too solicitous in promoting the honour and kingdom of Christ among men and serving His interests, whose zeal for our eternal welfare and for the honour of His Father's laws brought Him into this world of sin and sorrow, and made Him become a propitiation for our sins.—*Sermon*, pp. 31, 32.

## CHAPTER LX.

*JOHN MAXWELL, M.A. (1732-1763),*

MINISTER OF ARMAGH.

1. A *Sermon* preached in the Meeting-house of Armagh, December 22, 1745, on occasion of the present Rebellion. Published at the desire of the two Independent Companies of Militia belonging to Armagh, to whom it was preached. [Prov. xxviii. 1.] 12mo, pp. 15. *Armagh*, 1746. M. C. D.

JOHN MAXWELL was son of the Rev. James Maxwell, minister of Omagh (1699-1750), and was born there in 1700. He was educated in an academy kept by a Mr. Sprott at Donaghadee, and he graduated at Glasgow. On the 15th of March, 1732, he was ordained in the congregation of Armagh as successor to the Rev. John Hutcheson (see ch. xlv.).

"After his settlement at Armagh," says Dr. Stuart, "he purchased the fee-simple of a tract of land named Eanach-buidhe, contiguous to the farm of his predecessor, John Hutcheson, and two townlands called Balliduff and Taimlaight, held under the See of Armagh.

"Mr. Maxwell gave to Eanach-buidhe the new denomination of Rosebrook. Here he erected a neat and convenient dwelling-house, and planted orchards and forest trees on an eminence encompassed with a flat, which, when he commenced his improvements, had been almost completely covered with water. His contemporary, Dr. Barton, informs us that his mansion was in a great measure built with petrifications found in the drained lands. In fact the lake, or rather, per-

haps, the soil with which its waters were impregnated, possessed a petrifying quality, similar to that of Lough Neagh.

"Many curious specimens of these petrifications were sent by Mr. Maxwell to Dr. Francis Hutcheson of Glasgow. He made also a collection of other singular petrifications found at Lough Neagh, which he transmitted to that University, at the request of the Professors.

"Primate Stone entertained sentiments of esteem for Mr. Maxwell, and evinced his respect for his character by granting him the lands, which he held under the See, on very reasonable terms. Thus encouraged, he manured his grounds with marl, of which he found an abundant supply on the spot, and as he was a perfect master of the best system of practical agriculture then in use, his plan of farming was generally adopted by the neighbouring landholders."

The only published sermon of Maxwell is that preached on the occasion of the Highland rebellion of 1745. He shows in it what we are to understand by a righteous man—one who, according to him, has a just regard to, and uniform discharge of, all the moral obligations he is under to God and man. Then he shows how the several parts of that character contribute to raise the mind to a noble fortitude and intrepidity in the circumstances of personal danger, and ends by affirming that the consideration of the present rebellion, the success of which, he thinks, would bring ruin on all sincere Protestants, "ought to rouse everything that is generous and manly in our bosoms, and unite us in a determined opposition to such a lawless attempt." The "Forty-five" in Scotland awoke, it is evident, a far deeper interest in Ulster than we could have anticipated. Deep popular feeling, which now gives vent to itself in newspapers, then expressed itself in sermons. Delap of Letterkenny (see ch. lvii.), Moody of Newry (see ch. lviii.), Gilbert Kennedy, junior (see ch. lxi.), and Maxwell, all preached and published sermons on this subject. Maxwell's sermon is inferior to the others.



He lacks the sound and weighty sentiment of Delap, the eloquence and spirit of Moody, and the polish of Gilbert Kennedy. His discourse, moreover, is deficient in evangelical tone, and contains little except plain and dry morality.

The Second Congregation of Belfast had become vacant in 1744, owing to the death of the author of *Presbyterian Loyalty* (see ch. xviii.). The Presbytery of Antrim usually drew its ministers from the ministers and licentiates of the Synod, and sometimes, when a member of the Synod was chosen to fill a vacancy, the congregation passed with him back to the Synod of which he happened to be a minister. For a time it was uncertain whether the choice of the Second Congregation should fall on Maxwell or on Mr. Gilbert Kennedy, junior. Professor Hutcheson of Glasgow thus writes on the subject to the Rev. Thomas Drennan (1736-1768), the successor of Haliday in the First Congregation of Belfast:—"I am extremely concerned for your divisions in Belfast. I find they talk of Jack Maxwell of Armagh, or young Kennedy. The talents of this latter I know not, but believe he has a very honest heart. Jack Maxwell is an ingenious, lively fellow, for anything I could discover. That Presbytery will miss him much."

The Presbytery was not asked, however, to miss him just then. The choice of the people fell upon his rival, the Rev. Gilbert Kennedy.

In 1753 Mr. Maxwell was chosen Moderator of the Synod of Ulster. When resigning office in the following year, he preached upon Colossians iii. 14, 15, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," &c., a passage which for two years in succession was the subject of the Synodical sermon. Maxwell's sermon did not produce the effect which the text encouraged. Some of his brethren were highly offended by it. Holmes of Glendermot, King of Dromara, and Semple of Anahilt complained loudly. The Synod in private considered these complaints, heard Mr. Maxwell's reply, and then found as follows:—1. That Mr. Maxwell had shown a con-

ciliatory spirit in attempting to satisfy objectors. 2. That he had not "contradicted any Christian doctrines contained in our Confession of Faith." 3. That he had said sufficient to remove grounds of offence. 4. That if any minister take offence at what is said in a sermon, he should speak privately to the brother so offending. The majority of the Synod, in fact, sympathised with the ex-Moderator, and snubbed the objectors; and the Synod's clerk entered on the record that Messrs. Holmes, King, and Semple "were not *fully* satisfied." When this minute was read for approval next year in open Synod, Messrs. Holmes, King, and Semple said, there was a slight mistake in the record. It ought to be "Messrs. Holmes, King, and Semple were not *at all* satisfied."

Mr. Maxwell died on the 13th of December, 1763. His funeral sermon was preached about a fortnight after his death by his friend Mr. Moody of Newry. In the discourse the preacher spoke of him as one who *judged for himself* in religion—a kind of expression by which New Light ministers were in the habit of complimenting each other, and which pleased them as carrying in it the insinuation, that nobody judged for himself except in so far as he deviated from the beaten path. But to most people it is clear enough that a man who decides to stay, in spite of temptation, in the old way of orthodoxy and truth, is judging for himself in as great a degree as the man that decides to turn aside into unknown or untried ways. He spoke also of his prayers being scriptural, rational, and warm; and claimed credit for his giving advice gratuitously to the sick, although physic was not his profession. For medical advice in such circumstances, the smallest coin current in the realm would have been remuneration amply sufficient.

Dr. Stuart, the historian of Armagh, whose information about Maxwell, it must be remembered, is only traditional, speaks of him as "a man of fine literary taste, correct judgment, pure morals, and ardent piety." He adds that he "was the intimate friend of Dr.

Francis Hutcheson, with whom he maintained a regular and highly interesting correspondence. Many of their letters were on philosophic and literary subjects." His papers were destroyed after his death, and thus this correspondence was made useless for after times.

Mr. Maxwell married Miss Rose Carron of Strabane, by whom he had two sons and three daughters. At the time when Dr. Stuart wrote his *Historical Memoirs* (1819), Rosebrook, Mr. Maxwell's residence, was a delightful rural retreat, and was still in possession of his descendants.

Among the descendants of the Rev. James Maxwell of Omagh, but not through the Armagh branch of it, may be mentioned the Rev. John Maxwell of Brigh, and the Rev. James Maxwell Rodgers of Londonderry.\*

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#### THE REBELLION OF 1745.

The consideration of the present rebellion ought to rouse all that is manly in our bosoms, and unite us in a determined opposition to such lawless attempts. If this attempt succeed—as God forbid it should—it must be attended with all the evils that are dreadful to a free people. In countries where Popery and arbitrary government are already established, the subjects, or rather the slaves, have nothing to fear from the change of their tyrants. A worse religion and a worse form of civil government are not to be invented; any alteration in Popish countries must therefore be for the better. But what can we expect from the power of France? that eternal enemy to the civil and religious liberties of mankind; one who is a tyrant over his own subjects, who seems to have an indignation that others should draw breath independent of his favour, and is, therefore, just now attempting to seize the monarchy of the universe. Can a scheme planned out by such a tyrant, that is to be executed by a host of robbers, conducted by desperate men, many of whom have been obliged to flee their native country from public justice—can such a scheme as this, I say, ever produce good to us, whose forefathers have been distinguished for nobly opposing such methods of violence? Can we hope to preserve our liberty and religion under a Government thus instituted? No! Though it is given out that the young invader and Pretender to the throne of these kingdoms is

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod*: Stuart's *Historical Memoirs of Armagh*: Hutcheson's *Letters to Drennan*.

a Protestant, yet the late King James is a memorable instance how much such conversions are to be depended on. He, while Duke of York, professed himself a Protestant, and before his accession to the throne many had actions brought against them for saying he was a Papist; and, though he was preserved from the Bill of Exclusion by the Church of England, yet, when he ascended the throne, that very Church soon found the direful effects of his Catholic rage.—*Sermon.*

## CHAPTER LXI.

GILBERT KENNEDY, JUNIOR, M.A. (1732—1773),

MINISTER AT LISBURN, KILLELEAGH, AND BELFAST.

1. *The Wicked Ruler*, or the mischiefs of absolute arbitrary power. A Sermon preached in the Second Presbyterian Congregation of Belfast, December 18, 1745, being the day of the General Fast appointed by Government. [Prov. xxviii. 15.] pp. 29. *Belfast*, 1745.
2. The Great Blessing of *Peace and Truth* in our days. A Sermon preached at Belfast on Tuesday, April 25th, 1749, being the day of Public Thanksgiving for the Peace. [2 Kings xx. 19.] pp. 26. *Belfast*, 1749. M. C. D.
3. The *Ambitious Designs* of wicked men under the restraint of Divine Providence. A Sermon preached at Belfast on Thursday, November 29th, 1759, being a day of Public Thanksgiving appointed by authority for the successes of the preceding campaign. [Isaiah x. 5-7.] 12mo, pp. 27. *Belfast*, 1759. A. C. B.
4. The *Character and Conduct of St. Paul* recommended as a pattern to all who devote themselves to the Christian Ministry. A Sermon preached at Lurgan, June 26th, 1764, at a General Synod of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Presbyterian Persuasion in Ulster, and published at their desire. [Gal. i. 10.] 12mo, pp. 44. *Belfast*, 1764. A. C. B.

GILBERT KENNEDY was son of the minister of Tullylish (see ch. xxxi.), and his Christian name was the same as his grandfather's and father's. Gilbert Kennedy of Tullylish had been one of the orthodox leaders in the Non-subscription Controversy: his son's sympathies were all on the other side, though he did not think it necessary to withdraw from the Synod of Ulster.

He was ordained as minister of Lisburn, in succession to the Rev. Alexander M'Crackan (see ch. xli.), on the 7th of

June, 1732. His settlement there does not seem to have been harmonious. A section of the congregation withdrew from his ministry, formed a new congregation, and built another place of worship. Finding his position thus made uncomfortable, he accepted with the more readiness an invitation to Killeleagh in 1733, where he succeeded the Rev. Patrick Bruce (1717-1732), formerly of Drumbo, who had lived only a year after being appointed to take charge of his father's congregation.

Here Mr. Kennedy spent eleven years. In 1744 the choice of the Second Congregation of Belfast, then vacant by the death of Dr. James Kirkpatrick (see ch. xviii.), fell upon him, and he removed from Killeleagh. The Second Congregation of Belfast, since the exclusion of the Non-subscribers in 1726, had been connected with the Presbytery of Antrim, but now that Mr. Kennedy became pastor, he did not renounce his ecclesiastical connection. The people having secured a minister of sentiments similar to their own, did not trouble themselves about his ecclesiastical relationships, so he and they again became connected with the Synod of Ulster. It is not known to me when he first began to sit loose to the early orthodox opinions that he had learned in his father's home; but all men, less or more, are modified by circumstances, and his new position, as minister of a congregation trained by its late pastor to Non-subscribing principles, may have helped to tone down the early lessons of orthodoxy which he had learned at Tullylish.

Mr. Kennedy's publications are all sermons, preached on various occasions during his ministry at Belfast. The first of them, *The Wicked Ruler*, was preached on the 18th of December, 1745, on occasion of the public fast appointed in consequence of the Highland rebellion in favour of "Prince Charlie."

His second appearance in print was a thanksgiving sermon preached on the 25th of April, 1749, at the conclusion of the war with France and Spain which terminated in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. In discussing his subject, he follows the natural order by



first explaining what is meant by peace and truth, and then showing that the preservation and continuance of them is a just foundation for gratitude and thankfulness. The peace thus celebrated did not last for any length of time. War broke out again, and raged more fiercely than before. The year 1759 was distinguished in the history of the nation; it was the year of the battle of Minden and of the storming of Quebec. The public thanksgiving for the triumph of British arms led to the publication by Mr. Kennedy of another sermon, preached in Belfast on the 29th of November in that year, entitled, *The Ambitious Designs of Wicked Men under the Restraints of Divine Providence*. As indicated by the title, its object is to point out that although God may permit tyrants to go to great extremes in wickedness, yet they are never from under His control, and that He often overrules their very wickedness to advance good ends which they never contemplated. He remarks upon the cruel and unscrupulous conduct of those who are actuated by ambition, but he maintains that Divine Providence rules notwithstanding. He concludes with suitable reflections founded on these considerations, calling on the people to rejoice that God reigns, to detest tyranny, and to be grateful for the national successes. So far as style and sentiment are concerned, the production is creditable to its author; but, in common with the other productions of the same school, it is deficient in that evangelical teaching without which preaching of any kind is of little worth.

In 1763, Mr. Kennedy was appointed to be Moderator of the Synod of Ulster. When resigning that office the year after, he preached at Lurgan a sermon on the *Character and Conduct of St. Paul*, which seems to have given great satisfaction to his brethren, for they gave him public thanks and asked him to print the discourse for general edification. In this production he dwells on various particulars which show the integrity and unselfishness of Paul in preaching Christianity, and he points out how far it is wrong and

unjustifiable to act from the motive of pleasing man. The various unsatisfactory opinions advanced do not speak much for the orthodoxy of the preacher, nor for the theological soundness of the Synod, at whose request the sermon was given to the world. It shows how very low the Synod of Ulster had fallen from the high tone of the Presbyterian Fathers of the previous century, and even of the men who forty years before had fought the battle of orthodoxy against the Belfast Society.

Mr. Kennedy died on the 12th of May, 1773. His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. James MacKay, minister of the First Congregation, who spoke of him in the following terms:—

“As a preacher his talents and abilities were universally acknowledged. Having an early taste for literature, a strong desire for improvement, and being naturally studious and contemplative, he acquired a considerable stock of knowledge, especially in those branches which related more immediately to his own profession. That branch of knowledge the most important of all others to a divine—I mean that which treats of human nature and the evidences of natural revealed religion—he had carefully studied, and was well acquainted with the best writers on these subjects, ancient and modern. The sacred writings, the sources of religious knowledge, he read with particular care and attention. As he made these, and not the creeds and systems of fallible men, the rule and standard of his faith, with candour and impartiality he inquired into their true sense and meaning, and in the course of preaching and expounding, explained them with critical skill and judgment.”

A portrait of him is said to be still in existence, and an inscription, which is given in M'Creery's *Ministers of Killeleagh*, p. 150. In M'Comb's *Presbyterian Almanac* for 1868, at page 75, I find the following notice of the descendants of Mr. Kennedy:—

“His son, William Trail Kennedy, was a Belfast wine merchant; and among his papers the late Dr.

Stephenson discovered the long-lost copy of the famous Adair Manuscript. The daughter of this William Trail Kennedy, of Annadale, is at present the wife of His Grace the Most Reverend Dr. Beresford, Lord Primate of all Ireland."

Life is as wonderful as romance. How strange to find the descendants of the minister of Dundonald, who was persecuted by Roger Boyle, Bishop of Down, and who, for fear of the prelates and of the military, often preached in the glens of Comber by the light of the stars (see ch. xxxi.), in possession of the Archiepiscopal Palace of Armagh, and sitting in the high places of the Church Establishment at the very hour of its fall.\*

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#### POSITION OF DISSENTERS IN 1749.

Is it not good, then, that we enjoy truth as well as peace ; that the most sacred of all rights, that of conscience and private judgment, is preserved to us ; that we have the liberty of reading the Scriptures, of judging freely and professing our religious sentiments without molestation in all points that do not affect the peace of society ? And Dissenters in particular, when they look back upon former times, and consider the hardships their forefathers suffered in every reign from the Reformation to the Revolution (or, I should say, the taking place of the Hanover succession), certainly have special reason to rejoice and be thankful for the freedom and tranquillity they enjoy. What a happiness is it that we may now serve God without fear, and worship Him in the way we judge most agreeable to His will, without running the hazard of enormous fines, being confined to loathsome dungeons, or forced to seek shelter in foreign lands ! We suffer no hardships now on account of religion, excepting such as are negative—I mean, our being put on a level with the notorious and avowed enemies of the constitution ; by being legally disqualified from serving His Majesty and the public in any places of trust ; for this very reason and no other, because we conscientiously scruple the terms of conformity. For disloyalty and disaffection to the Government is not, cannot *be* alleged, since, when there are public ends to serve which require our assistance, the penal law is superseded as long as the necessity for our service continues. This incapacity, though it be complained of as a grievance, a hardship

\* *Minutes of Synod : Killen's History*, vol. iii. p. 325 : Mackay's *Funeral Sermon*.

we are laid under on account of religion, and a violation of the common rights of subjects, Protestant Dissenters notwithstanding, when they consider the severities their predecessors suffered in former reigns, think their condition very eligible under the present Administration, and are sincerely thankful for the protection and tranquillity they enjoy ; that the Government has put it out of the power of their enemies to harass and oppress them, who, if they were not muzzled, still retain the disposition to tear and devour. Though still they cannot help thinking it a desirable circumstance, and what they may expect some time or other from a Protestant Government so mild and equitable, that this grievance should be redressed ; that such a valuable body of Protestants, whose loyalty has been always untainted, should be restored to their rights equally with other Protestant subjects, which they think both *religion* and *good policy* concur to recommend ; hurting men in any degree for their religious opinions being, they apprehend, no way agreeable to the former, nor dividing, and consequently weakening, the Protestant interest to the latter. It cannot well, we think, be taken amiss that we should thus presume to represent our grievances. To receive and hear grievances is a great part of the business of the Legislature, and to redress them their great glory. We are in a miserable condition, indeed, if we may not be allowed to complain when we think we are hurt.—*The Great Blessing.*

#### PRUDENCE OF ST. PAUL.

Though he was naturally of a warm temper, and had a great zeal for the honour of God and aversion against idolatry, yet his zeal was properly tempered, and did not carry him to any furious and indecent extravagances, either in his conversation or his sermons, which he knew could answer no other purpose than to create invincible prejudices against him. We have a remarkable instance of his great prudence and address in his behaviour at Athens. When he came there, and saw the city so full of idols and altars, "his spirit," the historian observes, "was stirred within him." He was fired with a generous indignation to see a city, distinguished for being the seat of science and politeness, as much addicted to the grossest idolatry as the most stupid and ignorant of those whom they called barbarians. Had he been a furious zealot and a hot-headed enthusiast, he would immediately have broken out in bitter railings and invectives against their idolatry, and have insulted and abused them for their ignorance and stupidity ; and perhaps he would have put to his hand to demolish their altars and to break their images. But his prudence restrained all excesses of this kind, and suggested to him that the wrath of man is not a proper mean to work the righteousness of God. He contented himself, therefore, with going to the synagogue according to his usual custom, and there disputing and reasoning with the Jews, and with the devout persons or prose-

lytes of the gate, and preaching Jesus and the resurrection to such of the citizens as he accidentally met with in the markets and public places of concourse, till at length he was brought before the Areopagus to answer the charge of being a setter forth of strange gods, and attempting to introduce new deities not authorised by the state, which was a capital offence. In this discourse before that august assembly we find him with the greatest boldness asserting the truth, at the same time in a manner as well calculated as the nature of the case would admit to prevent their taking offence, to engage them to give him a calm and patient hearing. He begins with observing that "in all things he perceived they were too superstitious." These words, as they stand in our translation, look indeed like a direct attack upon their idolatrous worship, and had the council understood the apostle in this sense, it would have been construed such an insult and outrage that without more ado he should have been ordered to prison, and undoubtedly would have met with the same fate that Socrates had done. But as the original word is often used in a good sense to signify religion and piety, these words were certainly understood, as the event clearly shows, not as implying any reflection, but rather as a sort of compliment to the religious and devout disposition that seemed, above all other places of Greece, to be characteristic of their city—there being scarce a deity worshipped anywhere to which they had not erected an altar, so that they were remarkable and distinguished for their devotion and the number of their deities and temples. He goes on to tell them that, as he passed through the streets, and beheld their devotions, among a vast variety of altars and images, he observed one altar in particular with this inscription, *To the unknown God*. From this circumstance he takes his rise to his discourse, and with great address observes to them that, instead of attempting, as he was charged, to introduce any new deities among them, all he meant was to explain the true nature and perfections of a deity already adopted by themselves, which by their own acknowledgment they did not understand, and whom they ignorantly worshipped. By this prudent management he was allowed to proceed in his discourse.—*Character and Conduct of St. Paul*, pp. 23–25.



## CHAPTER LXII.

ALEXANDER COLVILLE, M.D. (1725—1777),

MINISTER AT DROMORE IN COUNTY DOWN.

1. A *Sermon* occasioned by the death of the late Mr. Thomas Nevin, preached at Downpatrick, March 24, 1744. [2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.] pp. 28. *Belfast*, 1745.
2. *The Persecuting, Disloyal, and Absurd Tenets* of those who affect to call themselves *Seceders* laid open and refuted, in a Letter addressed to the People under the care of the Presbytery of Antrim. pp. 32. *Belfast*, 1749.
3. Some important *Queries* humbly and earnestly recommended to the serious consideration of the Protestant Dissenters in the North of Ireland belonging to the Synodical Association. pp. 48. *Belfast*, 1773. M. C. D.

DR. COLVILLE was son of the Rev. Alexander Colville, minister of the congregation of Dromore in the County Down (1700—1719). His father had been a member of the Belfast Society, but died prior to the Synodical controversy which that Society originated. The young man had not completed his education when his father died, and the congregation resolved not to choose a minister to succeed the father until they could have an opportunity of hearing the son. From his having the degree of M.D., it would seem that at first he studied for the medical profession, and that his turning to the ministry was an after-thought.

The Non-subscription Controversy was at its height in the Synod, when Dr. Colville, having previously been licensed by the Presbytery of Cupar in Scotland, received a call to be minister of Dromore. Though



he had signed the Westminster Confession in Scotland, yet he was known in Ireland to be warmer in favour of non-subscription than his father had been, and this led to some in the congregation giving strong opposition to his settlement over them as a minister, mainly because they suspected him of cherishing erroneous opinions in regard to the Trinity. He wished to be ordained, but persisted in refusing to renew his subscription to the Confession; while those in the congregation who opposed his settlement alleged that his refusal to subscribe was evidence of his errors. The case was carried from Presbytery to sub-Synod, and from sub-Synod up to the General Synod. There he thought it certain that, as the Subscribers were the majority, the case would go against him. Anticipating an adverse decision, he went over to London with the consent of his session\* and had himself privately ordained by ten Presbyterian ministers in the vestry-room of Dr. Calamy's church. These ministers were themselves N.S.S., who had no sympathy with the majority of the Synod, but were rather pleased with the opportunity of interfering in this gratuitous way and of obstructing the proceedings of the subscribing ministers of Ulster; and of course they did not require from the young man subscription to any creed whatever, preliminary to his ordination.

On his return to Ireland, he and his people applied to the Presbytery of Armagh to instal him in Dromore, all difficulties in the way of his ordination being now, as they alleged, removed. Instead of complying with this apparently modest request, the Presbytery resented his conduct as an evasion of the law by refusing to recognise him in any way, and by sending supplies of preaching to that party in the congregation which opposed his settlement and adhered to the majority of the Synod. He appealed against the refusal of the Presbytery to proceed with his installation, and the case came up to the General Synod at Dungannon in June, 1725. The Rev. John Stirling of Ballykelly

\* Boyse's MS. *Letter* to Dr. Steward, dated January 20, 1725.

(1692-1752), himself a warm supporter of orthodox principles, was Moderator on that occasion. Before hearing his appeal, the Synod determined to take up his recent conduct in going abroad to seek ordination, with the design of setting at nought the laws of that Church into whose ministry he sought to enter. He was present in Synod when it was formally announced from the chair that his trial would proceed on the following Tuesday; but no written citation appears to have been served upon him.\* He withdrew immediately from the house and went home to prevent a more formal citation, and hoping perhaps that the Synod would not take up the case in his absence. In this he was mistaken. The Synod held the announcement from the chair in presence of the accused to be equivalent to a written and formal citation. Having examined the document and heard parties, they suspended him for three months, and although the whole party of N.SS. opposed it with all their might, they resolved to suspend any minister of the body who should hold ministerial communion with him in the interval.

Colville had now gone too far in his course of rebellion to recede. He preached to the congregation in disregard of the sentence of the Synod, and he applied to the ministers of Dublin to receive him into their Association, and to instal him in his charge. The Dublin ministers had never been regularly organised as one of the Presbyteries of the Church, but they had Presbyterian sympathies; they had formed themselves into a Presbyterial Association; they had repeatedly sent corresponding members to Synod, and during the great controversy had always been preaching peace and forbearance both to SS. and to N.SS. in the North. Had it been as easy to practise as to preach, they would on this occasion have modestly declined to interfere in matters which did not lie their way; but of late their sympathies had begun to run strongly in favour of non-subscription; and though well aware of the difficulties

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod*: Boyse's MS. *Letter to Steward*.

of the case, they could not deny themselves the privilege of interference. "I am apprehensive," says Boyse in a private letter to a friend, "this will put a thorn in our foot, by that congregation's applying to us to receive them into our Association. If we do, the Synod will think we counteract their canons. If we refuse, what shall we do with that apostolical one, Rom. xv. 7?" Dromore did put *a thorn in their foot*, and the Dublin ministers submitted to the operation without a remonstrance or a wince. They sent to the North a deputation of three of their members, Choppin of Dublin (see ch. xliv.), M'Gachy of Athy, and Woods of Summerhill, who, in opposition to the remonstrance of the sub-Synod of Armagh, and in disregard of the Synodical sentence of suspension, received the congregation into their Association, and installed Dr. Colville as the minister on the 25th of October, 1725. The immediate result was that the Synod in self-respect had to break off all intercourse with the Dublin Association of ministers; and such of them as disapproved of these proceedings and adhered to the majority of the Synod were forthwith organised into a separate body, known afterwards as the Presbytery of Dublin, in connection with the Synod of Ulster.

Forthwith an orthodox congregation was formed in Dromore, which, in the course of time, had appointed over it a minister of its own; but the original congregation in the manner described became a N.S.S. congregation, and, with Dr. Colville acting over it as pastor, continued apart from the Synod till the time of his death.

Dr. Colville was late in commencing to publish. His first work in that way was the funeral sermon for Rev. Thomas Nevin of Downpatrick (see ch. xxxviii.), a gentleman who figured in the Non-subscription Controversy to a still larger extent than himself, and who, as we have seen, with a better case, received a still smaller modicum of justice.

To most thoughtful readers of these sketches, it will be evident that the Seceders, who in 1742 made their first arrival in Ulster, had not come an hour too soon.

Within seven years after, there were few places in the province to which their preachers had not paid a flying visit; and, as it was the growth of principles such as those avowed by Dr. Colville which made their presence welcome in many quarters, he thought himself bound, in common with others, to take up the gauntlet that they had thrown down. This was done in a *Letter* from his pen, which was published in 1749, wherein he undertook to show that the tenets of the Seceders were persecuting, disloyal, and absurd.

His *Queries*, published in 1773, was occasioned by the controversy that had then arisen between the Rev. John Cameron of Dunluce and the Rev. Benjamin McDowell of Ballykelly. This production is interesting, as showing how keenly the replies made by the pastor of Ballykelly were felt by the N.S.S.; for he complains, without much reason, of what he calls "the rude and illiberal" manner in which that youthful polemic "attacked the gentleman whom he supposed to be the author of *The Catholic Christian*, whose unblemished character, age, abilities, and diligence in studying the Holy Scriptures, surely entitled his argument and person to better treatment." In fact, his reference to the controversy makes it evident that Mr. Cameron, though regarded as the champion of his party at the time, had, in Dr. Colville's opinion, won no laurels in this encounter. The *Queries* turn mostly on the dishonour done to the Scriptures in the writer's opinion by men who substitute subscription to an uninspired creed for subscription to the inspired Word of God. He takes exception to the Westminster Confession on the ground of what it says about predestination and the civil magistrate; but it is evident that even if these points could have been explained to his satisfaction, he would still have taken exception to it on the ground of its being void of inspiration. If the object of a creed is simply to set forth and to define what we understand the one inspired Book to teach on this and the other subject, it is hard to see how a creed could be anything but uninspired.

Dr. Colville survived down till 1777. His funeral sermon was preached on the 4th of May in that year by the Rev. James Bryson of Lisburn, and stands as No. 4 in the volume of the published discourses of that gentleman. The text is 2 Cor. v. 10, and the subject is the *Immortality of the Soul*. Towards the end of the sermon he refers to the deceased in very laudatory terms:—

“It is,” says he, “but strict justice to the memory of so great a man to declare that in strength, boldness, and energy of thought, in a rich, clear, and comprehensive understanding, and in all the qualities of accuracy in reasoning, readiness of speech, uninterrupted presence of mind, and masterly command of his own talents, to which these gave birth, he has been but rarely equalled among the sons of men. . . . He was a steadfast and unshaken friend of civil and religious liberty. His conduct during that most illiberal of all rebellions in the year 1745 is a proof of the former; and as to the latter, it is sufficient to say, that he was from the beginning a fellow-labourer with the immortal Abernethy, Haliday, Bruce, Kirkpatrick, &c., in defence of the religious rights of men and Christians. Few understood this subject better, or were capable of defending it in a more masterly manner.”

Did we not know that men sometimes fail to do justice to themselves by the representations that they give of their intellect and attainments in their writings, and if we were to form our estimate of him from the only production of his which has fallen into our hands, we would consider this estimate somewhat overdrawn. To us he seems a naturally able man, maimed in his usefulness for want of sound religious training in his youth, and falling in with associates in after-life who wanted the will and the power alike to heal “the lame that was turned out of the way.”\*

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod*: Boyse’s MS. *Letters to Steward*: Bryson’s *Funeral Sermon*: Killen’s *History*.



## AGAINST UNINSPIRED CREEDS.

But though I hope it will abundantly appear that every test of orthodoxy invented by men not inspired, containing their particular sense of Scripture and inferences from it, are an high dishonour to the great Prophet of the Christian Church, and an invasion of the rights of our fellow-Christians, yet it must be acknowledged some are worse than others, as they are more stuffed with mysterious, unintelligible opinions, metaphysical whims, or perhaps downright falsehoods. If that ancient creed called the Apostles' (which, because it is the shortest, is for that reason the best) tells us that after Christ's death and burial "He descended into hell," though He promised the penitent thief upon the cross that he should be with Him that night in Paradise, what may we expect within so large a creed as the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, or the thirty-three Chapters of the Church of Scotland, to say nothing of the Popish creed composed by the Council of Trent? It is near four thousand years since Elihu (whose reasonings for God were not disapproved by Him) waited patiently till the three friends that were more ancient he had found were unable to convince Job or answer his words; he thought "days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom." This young man, though full of matter, and his belly was as wine ready to burst, yet says, "I am young, and ye are very old, wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion." How amazingly are the times and manners changed! Behold the Reverend Mr. Benjamin M'Dowell setting himself forward as the great champion of human tests of orthodoxy, taking the work out of the hands of all the ancient fathers of the General Synod, saying in effect, "I am the man, wisdom shall die with me; subscription will be overturned, heresy will rush into our Association like a torrent if I do not draw the sword of controversy in support of it." Nay, he has courage enough at last to assert that the requiring subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith is a fit and proper test of ministerial communion among you, or, in other words, that you ought not to admit any one to be a minister who scruples or refuses to subscribe that book; and if any person who formerly subscribed it when a youth has, by giving himself to reading and meditation, found cause to doubt of some articles contained in it, let his conduct in other respects be ever so unblamable or amiable, you ought to cashier him as one who has broken his covenant with you when he became your minister, which, no doubt, was never to know more or less than what is contained in that book, or else that he should keep back from his hearers what appears to him a useful or important truth of God. When I read of the immense memory of a Xerxes, the deep penetration of a Scaliger, the solid and comprehensive judgment of an Abernethy, I am apt to say to



myself, Has the Deity formed the souls of men alike ; does all the difference between them arise from culture and the different organisation of the body, that a Newton or a Locke should cast me at so great a distance in the mental and moral powers of the soul ? But this assertion and advice of Mr. M'——'s administers fresh matter of humiliation to me ; I say to myself, Mr. M'——I surely understands every section of this book, or he could not subscribe it, far less would he impose it upon others ; how comes it, then, that there are so many points asserted in it that I cannot so much as guess what the compilers intended ? I cannot but envy the Association that is blessed with such a member ; he certainly has got the spirit of Hudibras' squire :—

“All mysteries who could unriddle,  
As easily as thread a needle.”

*Some Important Queries.*

## CHAPTER LXIII.

JOHN KING (1726—1762),

MINISTER OF DROMARA.

1. A *Letter* to the Rev. Mr. Fisher of Glasgow respecting the conduct of Seceders in Ireland, dated Drummaragh, March 21st, 1748. [Republished in a pamphlet entitled *A View of Seceders*, pp. 35. *Belfast*, 1748.] W. D. K.
2. A *Letter to the Protestant Dissenters in the North of Ireland*, occasioned by some Teachers from Scotland called Seceders. By a Protestant Dissenter. 12mo, pp. 14. 1748. M. C. D.

JOHN KING was a Scottish probationer, who, having come to Ireland, was received into connection with the Synod of Ulster in 1719, and was ordained as minister of Dromara, in County Down, on the 14th of December, 1726.

From 1745 the Associate Presbytery, consisting of several ministers whom patronage and moderatism had driven out of the Church of Scotland, began to find a footing in Ulster, and to send over ministers and probationers to diffuse their sentiments and to gather adherents out of the congregations of the Synod. One of the fathers of the Secession, the Rev. James Fisher of Glasgow, visited the country himself in the spring of 1747, and preached in various districts. Many of the ministers, naturally enough, were suspicious of these Seceding preachers, and regarded them as unwarranted intruders, coming, under pretence of preaching the Gospel, to sow disaffection among the people, and to gather a flock out of pastures where they had no sheep

of their own. This was always the case when the minister, into whose bounds one of these evangelical raids was made, happened to be a New Light man, or was known to sympathise with New Light principles. But, on the other hand, some of the ministers and many of the people admired the courageous stand which the Seceders had made against patronage in Scotland, and thought that their ministrations in the North of Ireland would lend strength to the cause of orthodoxy and truth.

Among the ministers who cherished these friendly feelings to the strangers was the Rev. James Allen (1726-1752), minister of the new congregation which had broken off from Dr. Colville at Dromore, at whose house Mr. Fisher was "kindly entertained," and where he met with Mr. King of Dromara. Their conversation turned on the religious condition of Ulster, and the two ministers satisfied Mr. Fisher that they were favourably disposed to Gospel principles, that they deplored the unevangelical sentiments of some of their brethren, and that they meant to lay before the approaching Synod, about to meet in Magherafelt, a statement of grievances. These grievances, in the main, were that the terms of subscription to the Westminster Confession were not sufficiently stringent, and that false doctrine had crept into the Church, and was likely to spread among ministers and people. Mr. Fisher, from the conversation, was led to indulge the hope that, through the instrumentality of these two gentlemen, he would be able to lay a train which would result in the disruption of the Synod; that he could persuade the more evangelical of the ministers formally to withdraw from communion with their brethren, and thus create in Ulster a great secession which would give instant strength and stability to the new sect, that was then endeavouring to sow its principles far and wide over the country with all the ardour of the founders of a new faith. He advised that, should their representation be refused by the Synod, they ought to be provided with a protest, in which they could declare their seces-

sion from the Synod, and claim the right to constitute themselves into a Presbytery, where they would be free to "prosecute the ends of a testimony for the purity of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government attained unto in the Kirk of Scotland, and solemnly engaged unto by the three kingdoms."

But when Mr. King thought over the matter with more care and deliberation, he did not consider it wise or expedient to adopt the extreme course which Mr. Fisher suggested. He had no ambition to be the founder of a sect or party. He was not convinced that he could do more for Christ outside the Synod than within it. No restraint was laid upon him in his present connection; nay, full liberty was given him to use his utmost efforts to advance the cause of Christ. He could not forget that the Synod only twenty years before had by a great effort cast from it the New Light ministers; and that although some of its members were not decidedly evangelical, yet every one of them had signed the Confession of Faith, and none of them had, so far, avowed either Arian or Arminian opinions. He considered, moreover, that were he to secede, he would leave behind him many in the Synod as thoroughly evangelical as himself, who could not see that the time for secession had yet come, and who could not bring themselves to think that secession was any certain remedy for every ecclesiastical evil. For these reasons Mr. King shrunk from the step suggested, and his representation of grievances resulted in the Synod of 1747 issuing a paper entitled *The Serious Warning*,\* in which they guarded their people against the errors and errorists of their times, not forgetting the Seceders themselves.

Mr. Fisher could not conceal his bitter disappointment, that a course of procedure from which he had hoped so much resulted in nothing, or in what he considered worse than nothing. He addressed a letter to Mr. King, dated 18th January, 1748, in which, under pretext of correcting some reports in circulation

\* See a copy of this paper in Killen, vol. iii. ch. xxvii. p. 264.

regarding himself and his recent tour, he takes the opportunity to manifest the chagrin he felt that events had taken a turn so very contrary to the ardent expectations he had formed. This production was at once put into circulation among the members of Mr. King's congregation, and others in the North of Ireland. The minister of Dromara replied in a letter dated 21st of March, 1748, addressed to Mr. Fisher, in which he enlarged on the irregular way in which the Seceders had intruded among the congregations of the North, and justified his conduct and ecclesiastical position with some degree of success. Both letters were re-issued in a pamphlet at the suggestion of the Synod, which met at Magherafelt in 1748.

The *Letter to the Protestant Dissenters*, issued anonymously, but ascribed to Mr. King in Dr. Reid's Catalogue, was published that same year. It is an attempt to excite political prejudice against the new sect, as if they were disaffected to Government. If the tract was really written by King, it was scarcely worthy of him to come forth anonymously with such charges, when he had not ventured to make them in the letter to Fisher published with his name. Controversy, however, excites strong feeling, and men under the influence of strong feeling sometimes write, as well as say and do, things of which they themselves in cooler moments would, it is hoped, be ashamed. Mr. King died on the 9th of November, 1762.\*

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#### METHODS OF SECEDERS.

Why are these methods so chimerical and fantastic, and at the same time of so bad an aspect on Christianity? Here, so far as I can see, in effect all is done by some kind of magic in names. The Seceders got a name in this country, and I believe I sometime helped to it. Upon this, without further evidence, some people must have Seceder preachers. In order to this, they get a paper signed with some number of names and sent over to you, where names seem to have an all-empowering power, without your knowing any of those whose names these are, or why they are

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod* : Reid's MS. *Catalogue* : King's *Letter*.

sent. Upon this, and as now having the state of a Church in a neighbouring kingdom duly laid before you, and as having that Church duly represented, in order to judge of her most intricate weighty affairs, when never a commissioner from said Church appears, you send over your delegates to disband our associations, though these were formed—I mean, our Congregational, Presbyterian, and Synodical—upon the plan of your own Confession of Faith. These delegates go on and manage still by the same engine of names. If they get a paper with some number of names—and a small number I am told will do, and very clandestinely obtained, and thus that they have the name of an invitation—they will come into any congregation and preach, without any concurrence of the minister or Presbytery to whom such congregation belongs, or making any apology or compliments to them; and there, upon the names that especially ministers have got, they will condemn ministers and judicatories, against whom never has anything been proven, or so much as alleged, if it was not behind backs, and first by the Seceders. Thus, and I need go no further, there is a management by a hitherto unknown power of names, in great defiance to the power of Christianity on men's hearts, and whereby its inviolable obligations are horribly trampled upon. Can such things stand a revisal in one's cool thoughts where there is any ingenuous thought?—*Letter to Fisher*, pp. 14, 15.

#### REASONS AGAINST A DISRUPTION IN THE SYNOD.

It is most certain, and unquestionably so in the eye of jealousy itself, that a very considerable number of the members of our Synod are as firmly attached to the doctrine of our Confession as any men whosoever. Now how could we part with these, which yet likely we might be obliged to, if we seceded from the Synod at that time; for they might not see cause for a secession at that time, though we might? And might not there be a great number of the members absent, as sometimes there is a vast number of absentees, that you would hardly say we are a Synod? And what could we propose by breaking with the Synod? They don't hinder us to preach sound doctrine, nor of any other duty; and may we not give a testimony to the truth to as much effect in our Synod, as anywhere else were we separated from it, and have error more effectually condemned? While our Synod keeps up the same profession, there is nothing inconsistent with our Confession of Faith; but they must condemn it synodically, or else be inconsistent with themselves, and then the world would justify our breaking with them: whoever gives not in to such condemnation of error and the erroneous, we can declare them not of our Synod, however great a majority these may be. But I need not proceed on such planning of things, now it manifestly appears that nothing we can do will be pleasing to you. You will either find or make faults, and all



capital faults too, unless we give entirely in to your Secession and take all our measures from you. No blamelessness in our conduct, no commendableness of it shall be our protection in this case. Behave as we will, your practice proclaims defiance to our being protected by this against your blackening us utterly, if anything can be supposed bad in any member of our Synod; and thus that you will run us down against all reason and justice, and in an utter disregard to truth and to the honour of our common profession. In short, you must be acknowledged as the only ministers, the sole directors in Church affairs. Pray was this the meaning of your Secession? And that because *you* made it, it must take place everywhere? It seems it must take place here as well as in Scotland, though you are ever so far from showing that we have the same reasons for it here, and that this cannot be shown. Sure *we* have no patronage, &c., no ministers deposed, &c.; yet no quarter for us, if we give not entirely in to your Secession.—*Letter to Fisher*, pp. 28, 29.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

THOMAS CLARK, M.D. (1751—1764),

MINISTER OF CAHANS, COUNTY MONAGHAN.

1. *A Brief Survey* of some Principles maintained by the General Synod of Ulster, and Practices carried on by several members thereof. 12mo, pp. 104. *Armagh*, 1751. A. C. B.
2. *Remarks* upon the manner and form of *Swearing* by touching and kissing the Gospels. Being partly excerpts from an anonymous book entitled *The New Mode of Swearing*, "tactis et deosculatis evangeliis," published thirty-three years ago. 18mo, pp. 22. *Glasgow*, 1752. A. C. B.
3. *New Light set in a Clear Light*. 12mo, pp. 119. [*Dublin*] 1755. W. D. K.
4. *Pastoral Letter* to his former Congregation. [*Posthumous*.] 8vo. 1792. M. C. D.

THOMAS CLARK was the third Seceding minister who was ordained over a congregation in Ireland, but the first of those thus settled who committed any writing to the press. Whether he was originally intended for the ministry or not is uncertain, but it is known that he took out a diploma as doctor of medicine at the University of Glasgow, and afterwards, when acting as a laborious evangelist and minister in the County Monaghan, he met with frequent opportunities of using his medical knowledge with advantage.

He was a native of Scotland, as all the early Seceders were. Previous to the year 1745 he acted as a sort of chaplain—perhaps I should say *tutor*, for he was at the time neither ordained nor licensed, to a gentleman's family in Galloway; but in that year the landing of the Pretender called him from his retirement, and he

took up arms on behalf of the Government and the House of Hanover. That rebellion was got up by the Scottish Episcopalian gentry, who had everything to hope from a restoration of the Stuarts and from an overthrow of the ecclesiastical arrangements so favourable to Presbyterianism made by King William; and these gentry, taking advantage of the strong relationship of clanship then so prevalent in the North, drew their simple-minded Highland followers after them. But the intelligent Lowland Presbyterians, knowing what their grandfathers had suffered from one Restoration, naturally dreaded another, and, as they had every right to be, were to a man on the side of the Government. The followers of Prince Charlie were, with few exceptions, Roman Catholics and Episcopalians. Clark mentions that after the battle of Culloden the Duke of Cumberland burned several Episcopal meeting-houses, and that he himself saw one of them burned.\*

After the rebellion was put down, Clark in April 1748 was licensed to preach the Gospel; and on the 27th of June in the following year he was sent to Ireland, with a commission from the Associate Presbytery in Glasgow to preach at Ballybay, Clennaneese, and elsewhere in Ulster. In pursuance of this commission he came to the North of Ireland, and in various parts of the country exercised his gifts as a probationer. His first text at Cahans was Acts xvii. 16-18. In due time invitations were sent him from three different congregations—Scone near Perth, Clennaneese near Dungannon, and Cahans near Ballybay—each asking him to accept the office of pastor. With the faith and courage of the true soldier, he selected what at the time was probably the most unpromising of the three, and in due course was ordained at Cahans on the 23d of July, 1751, by three ministers, who acted as a delegation of the Burgher Presbytery of Glasgow.

Dr. Clark proved to be a most faithful and indefatigable minister. From Ballybay as a centre he travelled over Monaghan and the adjacent counties, everywhere

\* *New Light set in a Clear Light*, p. 84.

arraigning the Synod of Ulster for its shortcomings and sins, but, as he went, never failing to preach a pure Gospel where an opportunity offered, and gathering together those who received his testimony into separate congregations. It could not be supposed that the ministers of the Synod, some of whom were, no doubt, deserving of censure, and others of whom were no less evangelical than Dr. Clark himself, would remain quiescent under charges hurled sometimes indiscriminately at them all. Oral discussions were held in various parts of the country, a war of pamphlets was waged, and as the strife thickened and feeling predominated alike over judgment and charity, very unworthy means were adopted to silence the strong clear voice which gave utterance to the old truths, in opposition to the colourless New Light theology then so common.

Even before his ordination, Dr. Clark had issued his *Brief Survey*, dated from Ballybay, November 12, 1750. It was sent out in answer to the pamphlet of Mr. Peebles (see ch. xc.). Its design is to justify the Seceding ministers in their coming to Ireland, by showing that many ministers of the General Synod held erroneous doctrine, and did not supply the people with the pure Gospel. He appeals to Carlisle's *Synodical Sermon* (see ch. lix.) in evidence of the charge of heresy, and to Delap's *Fast Day Sermon* (see ch. lvii., No. 3) as showing that various members of the Synod were lax in their theology and in their personal religion. It is manifest that the writer has obtained a very firm grasp of pure Gospel truth, but the literary merits of the *Survey* are not high. The author is narrow in his views; and while, no doubt, some ministers of Synod left themselves too open to censure in regard both to doctrine and to life, yet, as was natural to a man in his position, giving proof of a necessity for his own existence, he makes the most of any blemish he can find. Apart entirely from its contents, the *Survey* is noteworthy as being the first work published by any Seceding minister in Ireland.

The following year he issued another pamphlet, but

only in part original, as he states upon the title-page. The Presbyterians, when summoned to appear in courts of justice, had long been accustomed to comply with the usual practice of kissing the book in confirmation of the testimony which they gave; but the Seceding ministers from the first impugned this custom as unwarranted and absurd, and taught the people to give their deposition in the more rational and Scriptural form, with hand uplifted to God. In the *Remarks*, which appeared in 1752, Dr. Clark deals with this subject. He presents evidence from Scripture for the practice which he approves, states objections to the prevailing custom, and meets what he heard alleged against the form that he desired to introduce. His tract is clear, short, and conclusive. For many years afterwards it was the practice of the Seceders to charge the ministers and people of the Synod with setting at nought the Scriptural form in a matter which they admitted to be an act of religious worship; and when a minister, accused of "kissing the calves" (Hosea xiii. 2), indignantly denied that he was ever guilty of such an act of idolatry, he was sure to encounter the retort that, if he had not "kissed the calves," he could not deny that he had kissed *the calf's skin*.\* The main difficulty in the way of the charge was, of course, the refusal of the civil courts to receive evidence which was not confirmed by kissing the book, but eventually even this barrier was removed. First the Seceders obtained legal exemption from the use of the common form on their own behalf, and in the end an Act passed the Legislature enabling any man to give testimony in the public courts in any form which he declared to be binding upon his conscience.† Since that Act came into force, the Presbyterian people have largely availed themselves of the liberty which it gives, and few of them now kiss the book in a court of justice, except such as are still

\* See James's *Homesius Enervatus*, p. 61.

† The Presbyterian community are indebted for this Act to James Gibson, Esq., at present (1879) the Chairman of Donegal, but who in 1838 was M.P. for Belfast.

ignorant of their own legal rights or regardless of the Scriptural form.

His zeal as a preacher, and the persistence with which he impugned the religious character of the ministers of the Synod of Ulster, made enemies to Dr. Clark, and the refusal of himself and his people to comply with the usual forms of swearing adopted in the courts of justice gave point to the charges of disloyalty whispered from one to another, and furnished to the unscrupulous a ready instrument for giving him trouble. Two elders of the congregation of Ballybay, Robert Nesbit and William Burgess, had him arrested on the 23d of January, 1753, as he had finished a sermon which he preached to the newly formed Seceding congregation of Newbliss, and on a charge of disloyalty had him conveyed to Monaghan. His scrupling to take the Abjuration Oath on the ground of the peculiar phraseology employed, gave some countenance to the charge in his case, as it had already done in that of M'Bride and M'Crackan (see chs. xiii. and xli.). There can be no doubt that sectarian jealousy was at the bottom of this unworthy act, and it has been supposed that the elders in question acted at the instigation of their minister. If this is true, it shows how far Presbyterianism had degenerated in fifty years, when one of its ministers and two of its elders could disgrace themselves by perpetrating on a Seceding minister the same acts of sectarian hatred, which the Episcopal clergy and magistrates of Belfast had practised on M'Bride and M'Crackan half a century before. Local and limited as this action was, it is certainly one of the most humiliating facts in our whole history. Dr. Clark, who in '45 had taken up arms against the Pretender, was as loyal to the reigning House as any man in Ulster; but he scrupled at the terms of the Abjuration Oath, and refused to take any oath by kissing the book; and he was put in jail under the pretext of punishing him for the disloyalty, of which these facts were supposed to furnish presumptive evidence, but in reality for being a Seceding minister. He was



detained in prison for two months and eleven days. The members of his congregation, not ashamed to own him in the day of his adversity, often resorted to him there, and he tells with pardonable pride—as he was well justified in doing—how, while he lay in jail, he married a couple and baptized thirteen children. All honour to the worthy men, the true descendants of the Presbyterian fathers, who stood by their minister in the time of his trouble, and who showed that his sufferings for conscience' sake only made him dearer to their hearts. When the judge of assize came on circuit, the good man was set at liberty, there being no real ground for his imprisonment. Had he taken an action against his persecutors, he might have made them smart for their ill-directed and unholy zeal; but he took the wiser and more Christian course, and left them to their own reflections. Time has done him justice; the stigma of infamy always attaches to the persecutor, and the innocent victim is remembered with honour.

It was soon manifest that Dr. Clark was neither to be terrified or silenced by anything that his adversaries could do. The year 1755 witnessed the publication of his *New Light set in a Clear Light*. It is a rejoinder to the Rev. John Semple of Anahilt, who had replied publicly to Clark's *Survey*, and who, while himself avowing orthodox opinions, had defended the Synod in regard to the sermon of Mr. Carlisle, and had thus palliated a production which he could not wholly stand over. Dr. Clark, in answer to Mr. Semple, traverses the whole ground in dispute between the Synod and the Seceders, defends the latter with considerable success, and is deservedly severe on the more objectionable statements of the Synodical sermon. He endeavours to convict the Synod of having expressed judicial approval of several errors which he considers involved in the language of Mr. Carlisle, such as making true religion to consist only in inclination and endeavour to know the will of God and do it, presenting religion alone, and not Christ, as the ground

of hope, pronouncing Church government a matter of small importance, undervaluing creeds and confessions, and regarding subscription to the Westminster Confession as no more than an ordinance of man. In the latter part of the pamphlet, he dwells upon various irregularities and scandals charged against some ministers of the Synod, and defends the action of the Scottish Seceding Presbyteries in sending supplies of preaching over to those in Ireland who sought their aid. The charges which he brought against the members of the Synod were such as baptizing the children of ignorant and immoral parents, admitting to communion persons who do not observe family worship, neglecting to visit and catechise the people, reading their sermons, and stuffing them with mere morality to the exclusion of the Gospel, not denouncing publicly prevailing sins, profaning the Sabbath, neglecting domestic prayer, and unbecoming deportment in general. That there was ground for some of these charges against individual ministers, there can be little doubt; in every large ecclesiastical body such persons may always be found. But that the charges were much too sweeping, exaggerated in their tone, and did not apply to the majority of the Synod, is certain; for it must be remembered that Dr. Clark was engaged in establishing in the country a new sect, which could only prosper by its success in dissociating members from the large Presbyterian body, and it was only natural for him to see ecclesiastical blemishes through an eye of very great magnifying power.

His wife died on the 18th of December, 1762. From that time a strong tie which bound him to his congregation was broken, and he felt more and more dissatisfied with his position. Moreover, the signs of revival which accompanied the ministry of his early years began to wear away. The people, as he imagined, cooled in their enthusiasm. The young people lost the ardour for religious knowledge that had distinguished them in former years. The very means of life was now parsimoniously supplied. He felt as if his usefulness in

that district was over, and he determined to leave it. While he was meditating about emigration, a call reached him from Albany in the State of New York, and another from Rhode Island in New England. He forthwith resigned his charge, and sailed from Newry on the 10th of May, 1764; but so imperfect were the means of transit at the time, that it was the 28th of July before the vessel reached New York.

Eventually he settled at Abbeville in South Carolina, where the last years of his life were spent. In his old age, nearly thirty years after he had bidden farewell to Ballybay, his mind reverted fondly to the people among whom he had spent his early years, and so many of whom he had been instrumental in leading to the Saviour; and he addressed to them a *Pastoral Letter*, dated March 15, 1791, which was published after his death. In this remarkable production, it is interesting to notice how the asperities of controversy, and the disposition to lay his finger on the sores in the life and doctrine of his brethren, and to pinch them by his touch, have entirely passed away. Now that the light-beams of the world which he is nearing are turned full upon his face, his dazzled eye cannot see the faults of other men. He dwells fondly on the scenes of his early ministry, which had left such deep impressions on his own mind, the first text from which he preached to the people at Cahans, the place of his ordination in William M'Kinlay's field, his first visitation to the first family in the congregation, and the first-fruits of the harvest, which in that district of the country he had gathered to the Lord. The latter part of the address is occupied with earnest spiritual exhortations.

Dr. Clark was found dead in his study, on Monday, the 26th of December, 1792, with a copy of his *Pastoral Letter* spread out before him. His last thoughts on this side of heaven were given to those to whose spiritual interests he had devoted the energies of youth, and many of whom, no doubt, had gone before him to the better land.

Judging from his writings, the first minister of Cahans

was not to be compared with many members of the Synod either in high culture or in literary power. But in all the essential requirements for a Gospel minister at the time and at the place when and where he was called to labour, few of them were his equals. He thoroughly understood and preached the great truths of the Gospel salvation. His zeal and activity were irrepressible. He spoke out clearly all he felt in his own heart. In a good cause he feared no man; and his ministry revived, and for many a year sustained, the drooping cause of true religion throughout Monaghan and the adjacent counties. Traditions of Dr. Clark, with his Scottish brogue, and Highland bonnet, and long gaunt figure, dashing away over the country on horseback, and carrying the treasures of the Gospel with him to distant villages and hamlets, are still common, and will be repeated and repeated for years to come at the firesides of the ancient Presbyterian families in that part of the province.\*

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#### THE TRUE GROUND OF HOPE.

Hence I can't but think that it appears incontestably evident that those ministers who thus set forth "knowing the will of God and performing thereof," whether natural or acquired, wrought in or done by the sinner, as "*that upon which are grounded all hopes of happiness*"—I say, such ministers are evidently guilty of greatly neglecting glorious Christ, the only Foundation, and leading people on to ground their hopes upon something wrought within them or done by them, instead of directing them to travel in the footsteps of the flock—to ground their hopes upon precious Christ in the promises.

Now what if a poor broken-hearted sinner should come to you with this perplexing case of conscience and say, "Ah! sir, I can't but look upon myself as destitute of true religion because I am more brutish than any man, not having learned the knowledge of the holy about the will of God: nor have I ability to perform it if I knew it, for when I would do good, evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am! what shall I do to be saved?"

I humbly think that, in consistency with this doctrine of your

\* Clark's *Works*: Killen's *History* of the Presbyterian Church.

Synod, the only answer you can return to such a perplexed soul is to this purpose, "Friend, the only true religion whereupon you are to ground your hope of happiness is to inquire impartially into the mind and will of God contained in the Scriptures, to exercise the right of private judgment, and not to be tied up to the rules or authorised forms of doctrine in any Church—to exercise mildness, meekness, compassion, charity, benevolence, and moderation to all men. Then you need not fear, but confidently, upon this alone, ground all your hopes of happiness hereafter." Sir, this answer is not a composure of mine, but borrowed from this approved Synodical sermon. And what miserable comfort is this to a convinced and distressed mind?

But the only proper answer which ought to be made to such a perplexed soul is to this purpose :—That the only sure foundation whereupon all hopes of happiness are to be grounded is Christ, exhibited to poor sinners in the free offers and promises of the everlasting Gospel; and whatever changes happen in the soul's case, even although the mists of sins and clouds of temptation do arise, and darken the once more clear knowledge of the Will of God; yea, although spiritual decays should render the Christian's once vigilant performance thereof now sadly slack and languid, far from what it was in months past; yet nevertheless this foundation of God standeth sure, and the warrants to build upon it remain unalterable summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, while that concluding invitation remains in our Bibles—Rev. xxii. 17, compared with Isa. lv. 1, and Prov. ix. 1, 3, 4, 5. And the perplexed soul is as welcome to build its hopes of happiness upon this sure foundation alone, even in its worst cases as well as in its best frame: another foundation can no man lay whereupon hopes of happiness can be built; and sorry am I that the Synod of Ulster ever approved a sermon wherein another foundation is laid—even our lame and imperfect knowledge of the will of God and performance thereof, setting aside thereby and neglecting Christ, the great foundation God has freely given us in Zion. Ungrateful requital! This is indeed a fundamental mistake, and saps the very root of Christianity in the world, it is derogatory to the glorious Redeemer's dignity in Zion as the ground of hope, and leads away the Christian from the sweetest springs of comfort. For, take us away from the ground of hope, Christ Jesus, then are we exposed to the curses of a broken law, the agonies of horrible despair, or else, upon the other hand, buoyed up on the pinnacles of pride and strong presumptuous delusion.—*Brief Survey*, pp. 11, 12.

#### SWEARING WITH UPLIFTED HAND.

It clearly appears from many places of the sacred records, that lifting up of the hand towards God in the most ancient and approved form of swearing oaths, it being the form



and manner of swearing practised by God, by the Angel of the Covenant, and by men.

1. That it is the only form and manner of swearing practised by the great God Himself appears very evident from the following texts:—Ex. vi. 8 (margin); Deut. xxxii. 40; Neh. ix. 7, 8, 15 (margin); Ezek. xx. 5, xxxvi. 7.

2. Lifting up the hand unto God was the form and manner of swearing practised also by the Angel of the Covenant, Dan. xii. 7; Rev. x. 5.

3. The same mode and gesture has been observed by men, as is evident from Gen. xiv. 22, 23; Isa. iii. 7 (margin).

Now any who are acquainted with the Holy Scriptures will plainly see, that lifting up of the hand and swearing are generally spoken of as a gesture and action connected together. And certainly such a constant concurrence and harmony of imitable examples given unto us in all ages of the Church, both by God, by the Angel of the Covenant, and by men, does amount unto an invariable law, and is equivalent to a Divine institution. Wherefore I conclude that all persons who own the authority of God, and acknowledge the Scriptures to be the only rule of faith and manners, ought undoubtedly, with all reverence, strictness, and godly care, to observe and practise the above gesture and form of lifting up the right hand unto God in the heavens always, when they are called before any judge to give an oath upon any matter of due weight and importance.—*Remarks*, pp. 2, 3.

#### MARTYRS FOR PRESBYTERIANISM.

Speaking of the thousands of Scotch Presbyterians who suffered persecution and martyrdom there in time of Charles II., you say, "The cause of their suffering was not at all for the form of our Church government, but for the substance of it. They died martyrs in a good cause, and their memories are always savoury to us."

Show the difference between the *form* and the *substance* of it, if you can. "Nonne forma dat rei esse?" It is plain from some of their last speeches on the scaffold, that they suffered for adhering to the very form of Presbyterian Church government. Instance Andrew Cuthill from Barrowstowness, who suffered at Edinburgh, July 27, 1681, in his last speech on the scaffold, saith—"I here, as one ready to step into eternity, saith . . . adhere to the Catechisms, Directory for Worship, FORM of Church government," &c. And John Nesbitt of Hardhill, Esq., and John Wilson of Lanark, attorney-at-law, with many others, in their last speeches on the scaffold, all declare their adherence to the Presbyterian form of Church government. See *Cloud of Witnesses*, and other historians. Had they quietly renounced it at first, and gone to hear the curates according to the then law, as many did, they might have shipwrecked their faith and a good conscience, and have enjoyed the



inglorious ease and sinful tranquillity of those times. If their memories are so savoury to you, why do you defend a sermon wherein the Church government for which they suffered death is declared a mere trifle or lesser matter? Is not this to say they died as fools and madmen, for smaller matters not worth contending for? And why do your brethren preach so bitterly against the Solemn League and Covenant—another ground of their sufferings? While other Protestant Churches have produced martyrs for the doctrine of Christ's prophetic and priestly offices, it has been the peculiar attainment and distinguishing glory of the Scotch Church to produce a cloud of witnesses for the doctrine of Christ's Church government, for the royal crown and dignity of His kingly office.—*New Light set in a Clear Light*, pp. 30, 31.

#### HIS MINISTRY AT CAHANS.

Some considerable time after this, I was called to visit William M'Kinlay in his last sickness. He was one of the first four who supplicated Glasgow Presbytery; it was at his house I lodged, and in his field I was ordained. Among other things, I asked him what he thought of his conduct in being so forward to promote the building of the meeting-house and supplicating Glasgow Presbytery for their probationers. He replied, that he was sorry he had not done and expended far more in that business, and that he chose to sit in a dark place of the meeting-house, that he might the better conceal the Lord's kindness to him in hearing the Gospel there; for often it was so great that he could not contain himself.

On December 18th, 1762, at nine o'clock, it being Sabbath night, you lost a praying friend by the death of my spouse; who a little before she expired said, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His, and His desire is towards me." After taking a little medicine, she said, "Now I am gone;" then prayed a few words and closed, saying, "My Lord and my God!" She was the second who was buried at your meeting-house.

The envy of our persecutors made them return honest William Craig, one of your elders, for high constable, as a trap, knowing he, in conscience, scrupled to swear the oath of office by touching and kissing the Gospels. Though he offered to serve, yet because he scrupled *book-kissing*, they confined him in close prison some months. At last, going to Dublin, I obtained a writ of *Habeas Corpus* for him, commanding the Sheriff of Monaghan to take him before the Court of King's Bench in Dublin, who in about fifteen minutes' trial released him. Some money should have been collected for helping to defray his expense, but we sinfully neglected it. He and his valuable spouse bore the affliction with great meekness and fortitude. May the Lord save his offspring from right and left hand extremes! may they still own the same good cause in this sinful dividing time! The

Donatist heresy is become common : every difference in sentiment, almost every offence, is like to be made a term of communion. And though it be a sort of Donatism in reality, yet some suppose it to be real reformation and holiness.

For two or three years before we parted, I observed a coolness of attention in public worship, nor had I heard of any person alarmed or edified by any of the holy ordinances for a great while ; also some sad scandals happened, even among those who had been communicants. All these led me sorrowfully to suppose that my usefulness among you was all over. "*What dost thou here, Elijah ?*" Your youth began to be weary in repeating their chapters and catechisms between sermons : others began to neglect secret prayer in the interval of public worship : unprofitable talk took place. Some appeared in practice to adopt the Quakers' opinion, that very little or no salary should be paid to ministers, though it be God's express ordinance, 1 Cor. ix. 14. Finding myself unfit for giving the Lord's Supper, and most of you not so fit as could be wished for receiving it, that ordinance was neglected for two years. One of your number then urged me to give it, saying, "Christ among all His hearers found but twelve ; He gave it to that : I am sure you will yet find twelve among this people."

It then happened that an invitation came to me from Volintown parish in Rhode Island, America ; and a call came also from a people near Albany in New York province, with a petition to the Presbytery, who granted it, and appointed me to go and supply them for one year.—*Pastoral Address*, pp. 25-28.

#### SHOULD THE UNCONVERTED PRAY ?

You object—"If by nature I am spiritually dead and under sentence of wrath, unable to think one good thought, why then do you bid me pray or examine myself ? Is not my prayer an abomination to the Lord ?" (Prov. xv. 8.)

*Answer.* God has given you one talent of natural ability to go to the place of public worship, to hear, and join the congregation in prayer, and faith cometh by hearing. Bury not that one talent in the depths of earthly concerns, but trade with it, as the woman who had but two mites, yet she came to the Temple service, and was accepted far beyond her expectation. If your power be as the man's withered hand, try to stretch it out as he did. Had he remained at home that day, his hand might have rotted off (Luke vi. 10). The blind man might have said that morning he was restored to his eyesight, "Many a day I have sat by the wayside begging, and Jesus never came in my way ; I'll go no more." And he might have wanted a cure ; but he went out again, and as Jesus of Nazareth passed by, he called on Him, and he was healed (Mark x. 52). The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, because, like the heathen, he thinks to be heard

for his much speaking, and so makes a saviour and an idol of his prayers ; but his total neglect of his prayer would be yet a greater abomination. The ploughing of the wicked God calls sin ; but it would be a far greater sin for him to quit his plough and starve himself and his family to death. His sin lies in depending on his plough for a crop, and not upon the Lord, who only can bless the increase of the field. Though you have lost your power to obey, God has not lost His power to command ; and His design in commanding and threatening you for your sinful neglect is, that as a rational creature you may find your inability, and make use of your natural powers in externally complying. And as wicked Ahab found it good to draw near to God by fasting and prayer, he got that answer, that the dreadful threatened wrath should be suspended all his days (1 Kings xxi. 29). Even so a poor wicked man, that lives and dies seeking God the best way he can, if he should not obtain all he asks, yet his situation will be preferable to the wicked, who casts off fear of perishing, and restrains all prayer before God, and shall be cast down to the lowest hell for ever. Seek the Lord with your natural powers, and ye shall find Him a God of all grace (Isa. lv. 6).—*Pastoral Address*, pp. 44-46.

#### COMING TO CHRIST BEFORE FORSAKING SIN.

Although I heartily own that the wicked are ever indispensably bound truly to believe, repent, and perform all other duties of the moral law, yet I aver that, according to the Divine method and order which the great God of order has set up in His kingdom—life and immortality being brought to light by the Gospel—it is the bound duty of all Gospel hearers to come *first* unto Christ, that is, to believe in Him, sincerely to credit His promises of pardon on repentance and strength to forsake sin ; believing being the first duty enjoined in the first precept of the moral law, which expressly requires us to know and acknowledge God as our God and Redeemer. But for you thus to teach polluted and diseased sinners that they must first forsake sin in order to come to Christ, is no less than to say upon the matter that we must first forsake our filthiness and be cleansed purely in order to come to the fountain opened in the House of David for sin and uncleanness ; or that we must first be cured, and entirely quit of all our dangerous diseases, in order to come to the Physician of value, to be by Him cured and instated in His covenanted favour.—*Brief Survey*, p. 96.

## CHAPTER LXV.

JOHN SEMPLE, M.A. (1736—1758),

MINISTER AT AHOGHILL AND ANAHILT.

The *Survey impartially examined* by Sacred Scripture and Sound Reason : Being an Answer to a late Pamphlet entitled "A Survey," &c., by Mr. Thomas Clark, Seceding Minister at Ballibay, wherein it sufficiently appears : 1. That all the Author's charges of unsound doctrine and irregular practice against the General Synod are groundless calumny and malicious reproach ; 2. That the Seceders are base intruders. To which is added some observations on Mr. Clark's credentials and the political principles of the Seceders, with some Impartial Remarks upon the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine's Synodical Sermon, and Mr. Clark's mistaken notion of the covenant of grace. 12mo, pp. 102. *Belfast*, 1754. M. C. D.

JOHN SEMPLE was ordained as successor to the Rev. Thomas Shaw of Ahoghill on the 1st of June, 1736. He had laboured there for thirteen years when he accepted a call to the united charge of Anahilt and Hillsborough, in which congregation he was installed on the 7th of June 1749.

Though Mr. Semple belonged to the evangelical section of the Synod, and might as such have been expected to hail the arrival of the Seceding preachers in the province, yet when he found that they spared no minister, no matter what his principles or character were, but took advantage of any opening in any congregation in order to form a society of their own, he felt towards them very much as the New Light mini-

sters did. Once when he was from home attending a brother minister's communion on the 19th of August, 1750, and his pulpit was vacant for the day, the Seceders improved the opportunity, and preached in his bounds to a congregation composed of his people. He took occasion on his return to warn his congregation publicly against the intruders. These were the days of ecclesiastical tournaments, when the champions of a party were glad of a chance of throwing down the gauntlet, and daring any to take it up. Forthwith Mr. Semple was favoured with two challenges, one from Dr. Clark of Cahans (see ch. lxiv.), another from a Mr. Magill, to meet them at Loughaghery, to settle their disputes in a public discussion. Mr. Semple had the prudence to decline the disputation, merely sending them word that he intended to print what he had to say on the matter. It would have shown perhaps still more wisdom had he made no public reference to the strange preachers, but resolved inwardly not to leave his pulpit vacant another Sabbath-day so long as he was in charge of the congregation.

Dr. Clark was at that time well forward in the preparation of his *Survey*, and when it appeared early in 1751, Mr. Semple was afforded the opportunity of coming out with his promised pamphlet. But his examination of it did not appear for three years afterwards. He mentions that he had delayed in order to give Mr. Peebles (ch. xc.) an opportunity of responding; but when he found that the gentleman in question made no sign, he came out in reply to Clark with the *Survey impartially examined*, the preface of which is dated "Cabra, May 1st, 1754." In this work he follows Dr. Clark closely, and notwithstanding a little asperity which betrays itself occasionally, his production is upon the whole a tolerably successful vindication of the Synod. It is so much of the nature of a reply, that it is difficult to find a passage at once free of allusions and personalities, and possessing at the same time sufficient interest for the general reader. Clark responded the following year by his *New Light set in a Clear Light*.



To this publication Mr. Semple made no reply. He died soon after, on the 24th of March, 1758.\*

#### PREPARATION OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.

The Confession of Faith itself was begun May 9th, 1645, and finished, approved, and sent to the press, May 11th, 1647; so that the Westminster Assembly were employed about it two years and two days, and no more nor no less. In a word, our excellent Westminster Confession, which has stood the trial of all its adversaries for the space of an hundred and seven years, and I hope will till time gives place to eternity, stands in no need of pious fraud and false assertions to procure it more regard from a consideration of the length of time taken up in its composure; it speaks for itself. Its perfect consistency with itself, its agreement in substantial with the best Confessions of the other Reformed Churches, and its universal harmony with the Holy Scriptures—the Divine spring from whence it was drawn, manifestly show that it is not a premature or hasty birth, but, on the contrary, was a work of due deliberation, great judgment, and profound study. But after all, what need one tell lies about it? We have the characters of its venerable authors from Mr. Baxter, in these words, that “they were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and great fidelity; though he was not a member himself, he was personally acquainted with many of them.”—*The “Survey” impartially examined*, p. 33.

#### ADVANTAGES OF SUBSCRIPTION.

. . . . Subscription may answer all the following valuable purposes, which we of the General Synod believe it does.

1. The subscription of our Westminster Confession of Faith is a strong barrier against innovations and corruptions in both doctrine, worship, and discipline.

2. It gives ministers mutual confidence of one another's soundness in the faith.

3. It gives us confidence in the soundness of the young men whom we license to preach, as also to the people who hear them, or call them for their pastors, when they know that they are of the same faith with themselves, seeing they have subscribed.

4. It gives joy to other Protestant Reformed Churches to know that we believe the same Divine truths with them; though the scheme or plan in which these are laid down in both their Confession and ours be different one from another.

5. It vindicates the Church from invidious calumnies, which

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod : Semple's Survey Examined : Killen's History.*



might be cast upon us, as if we believed things which we abhor, or denied some essential doctrines which we firmly believe.

6. Our subscription hands down from age to age to our posterity with moral certainty what the doctrines were which we professed, and many other valuable purposes too tedious now to mention.—*The "Survey" impartially examined*, p. 39.

#### HOW TO SERVE INFORMERS.

If you had served your informers as an honest justice of the peace in this kingdom served his in the reign of King Charles II., who offered to inform against a Presbyterian minister, you had acted more like an honest man. Says the informer to the justice, "I was at a conventicle last week, and I can tell you who preached, and several of those who were hearers." "Well," said the justice, "what do you remember the minister said? What was the text, and what said he upon it? Spoke he any treason, heresy, or sedition?" "Nay," says the fellow, "I cannot come to particulars, for I cannot read; but," swearing a great oath, by his soul, "the very text itself was both treason and sedition!" "Get you gone," says the justice, "or I'll commit you to the stocks this moment, you ignorant, malicious, cursing villain! Was the Word of God sedition and treason?"—*The "Survey" impartially examined*, p. 53.

## CHAPTER LXVI.

*HUGH GASTON* (1748—1766),

MINISTER OF BALLYWILLAN, COUNTY DERRY.

*A Scripture Account of the Faith and Practice of Christians, consisting of large and numerous collections of pertinent texts of Scripture upon the sundry articles of Revealed Religion.* pp. 500. *Dublin*, 1763. T. W.

HUGH GASTON was ordained as minister of Ballywillan, near Coleraine, on the 23d of February, 1748. He married the daughter of his predecessor in the congregation, the Rev. James Thompson (1718–1747). Two sons and a daughter survived him, the dates of whose death are recorded on a tombstone in Ballywillan churchyard.

When he entered on his ministry, spirituality was perhaps at its very lowest in the Synod of Ulster. The love of many to the truth had grown cold, and the orthodoxy of some was more than suspected. Mr. Gaston at least was sound in the faith. Cut off by his position from intellectual circles, and deprived of the advantages derived from the study of many books, he devoted his time to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and with marvellous industry and labour selected a series of texts, and arranged them into systematic form, with the view of illustrating the main points in the faith and practice of Christians. He accompanies the passages with no comment; he allows each series of proofs to speak for itself. When the reader has examined the various passages under each heading, he is allowed to draw his conclusion as to what the inspired

writers intended to teach. The author grasped firmly the grand principle that *nothing is a part of Christianity except what is taught in the Bible*, and his work is the result of his reception of that principle. The original edition appeared at Dublin in 1763; but the various editions which have since issued from the press prove that it has not ceased even yet to be useful. An edition of it was printed at London in 1813; in 1816 it was republished at Glasgow and Edinburgh; and another reprint, corrected, compared, and revised, by Joseph Strut, appeared at London in 1824. The last edition I have seen is that of Aberdeen in 1847, and perhaps the career of usefulness of this unpretending work is not yet at an end.

There is a tradition that Mr. Gaston emigrated to America owing to pecuniary embarrassments, produced partly by the poverty of the country and partly by the publication of his book. However this may be, he did not long survive, as I find from the Manuscript Minutes that the date of his death is the 15th of October, 1766. His widow lived to be very old; her name does not disappear from the list of annuitants on the Widows' Fund down till the year 1823. She died on the 27th of February in that year, aged ninety-six.

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#### HOW SCRIPTURE TEACHES.

Every one who is acquainted with the Sacred Scriptures knows, that the complete account which they contain of any one article of religion is never to be met with altogether in one place, without other subjects intermixed with it, but is to be collected from many different places of the Bible, where the sacred writers have touched upon it.

In every one of the many different places of the Bible where any one article of religion is touched upon, it is still placed in some useful light for instruction, so that none of these places are superfluous. All these places taken together do make up the complete Scripture account of the subject; they contain all the light which the Spirit of Revelation hath afforded upon it in writing, as needful for instruction; whoever would view the Scripture truth, in all that light afforded, must search the Scriptures

for the different places in which it is contained, or where the subject is mentioned. In these places it will be found sufficiently explained, enforced by all its proper motives, applied to all its proper uses, and set in every advantageous light needful for being rightly understood and properly applied, even after extraordinary inspiration hath ceased.

Our blessed Saviour, who best knew the most profitable method of reading the Scriptures, directed to search them (John v. 39) for the knowledge of His character and offices taught, not all in one, but in different places of the Scriptures, which being taken all together, fully and plainly described Him to the world, and left unbelievers inexcusable. Those have succeeded best in ascertaining the true sense of many portions of Scripture, and in answering objections against them, and setting several Scripture doctrines in a clear light, who have first searched the Scriptures for the whole and complete account of the subject, and hereby were enabled to show that what was doubtful, by being briefly expressed in one place, was sufficiently enlarged upon and explained in others. Besides such explications of Scripture truths as are to be found in the Scriptures themselves, none else are to be depended upon, for the sacred writers, being sufficiently qualified for their work, did not leave it to be mended by inferior hands; they left the Scriptures a finished performance, containing a system of religion from God, which, like all His other works, is good and perfect in its kind, being full and complete in all its parts, plain and proper in its terms and expressions, and efficacious or sufficient to answer the ends for which it was written. If it fails, no other writings will prove effectual for reforming the world and making mankind wise to salvation. Every hopeful method, therefore, ought to be tried for assisting Christians to reap from the Holy Scriptures all the benefit they are suited to afford.—*Preface to the Scripture Account.*

#### ELECTION.

Matt. xx. 16. Jesus said, Many be called but few chosen.

xxiv. 22. For the elect's sake those days (of calamity) shall be shortened (Mar. xiii. 20). Ver. 24. False Christs and false prophets shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect.

Ver. 31. The Son of man shall (at the last day) send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other.

Luke xviii. 7. Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?

John vi. 37. Jesus said, All that the Father hath given me, &c. Ver. 39, 44.

xiii. 18. Jesus said, I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen ; but that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up the heel against me.

xv. 16. I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit. Ver. 19. I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Rom. viii. 33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth them.

ix. 6. They are not all Israel which are of Israel. Ver. 10. When Rebecca had conceived by Isaac.

Rom. ix. 11. The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. Ver. 12. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. Ver. 13. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated. Ver. 16. It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. Ver. 18. He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Ver. 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay?

xi. 2. God hath not cast away His people, which He foreknow. Ver. 4. Seven thousand were reserved in Israel, who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Ver. 5. So at this time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Rom. xi. 6. And if by grace it is no more of works. Ver. 7. Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Ver. 28. As touching the election, the Jews are beloved for the Father's sake.

Eph. i. 4. God hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Ver. 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

Col. iii. 12. Put on (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness, &c.

1 Thess. i. 4. Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God.

2 Thess. ii. 13. God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

2 Tim. ii. 10. I endure all things, for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

Titus i. 1. Paul, an apostle according to the faith of God's elect.

James ii. 5. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which He hath promised to them that love Him?

1 Peter i. 2. Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the

Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

ii. 9. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him, who hath called you out of darkness, to His marvellous light.

v. 13. The church that is in Babylon, elected together with you.

2 John 1. The elect lady. Ver. 13. The elect sister.

Rev. xvii. 14. They that are with the Lamb are called, and chosen, and faithful.

See 1 Tim. v. 21. Elect angels.

Christ is God's elect, Isa. xlii. 1.—*From the "Scripture Account."*



## CHAPTER LXVII.

JOHN HOLMES, M.A. (1715—1773),

MINISTER AT DONEGAL AND GLENDERMOT (SECOND CONG.).

1. *A Sermon* preached from Rom. v. 7, showing the difference that is betwixt a Good Moralist and a Godly Man. By a Lover of Evangelical Preaching. 18mo, pp. 22. *Derry*, 1764. A. C. B.
2. *Remarks* upon the Terms of Communion published by the Reformed Presbytery.
3. *Corroborating Remarks* upon the same subject.
4. *A Testimony* of the Rev. John Holmes within the Liberties of Londonderry against several falsehoods that the Mountain Ministers have lately been guilty of, &c.
5. *An Answer* to the pamphlet of Nelson of Ballykelly.
6. *Some Remarks* upon the Rev. James Hull's Synodical Sermon. By Rehem Tamim. pp. 24. *Londonderry*, 1771. A. C. B.

JOHN HOLMES was ordained as minister of the congregation of Donegal on the 27th of September, 1715. He was a young man at the time of the Non-subscription Controversy, and, unlike some, seems to have had his attachment to orthodoxy strengthened rather than shaken by the discussions of that time.

The difficulties of living so near the base of the Donegal mountains were in those days greater even than now; but when once settled in such a position, it was not easy to obtain a removal. In July, 1722, the minister was in prison, probably for debt, and we find David Vance, one of the elders, coming to ask the Presbytery of Letterkenny to send supplies of preaching to the people. The imprisonment most likely did not long continue, for in the November of the same year we find

him at liberty. In 1730 the congregation of Ardstraw, then vacant by the secession of the Rev. Isaac Taylor (1718-1729) to the Episcopal Church, gave a call to Holmes, but the sub-Synod of Derry, which met in April, 1731, refused its sanction to his acceptance of the invitation.

It was not till thirteen years after, that he succeeded in escaping from the cold regions of Donegal, and fixing his abode in the sunny valley of Glendermot. He was installed as the first minister of the newly formed congregation there on the 19th of April, 1744.

If Mr. Holmes's *Sermon on Romans* v. 7 be in reality his first work, he was late in venturing into the field of authorship, for at that time he was nearly fifty years in the ministry. In that publication he condemns what he calls legal preaching, and points out that mere morality is quite a different thing from spiritual religion. It is evangelical in tone and sentiment, but the paper, printing, and punctuation, do not reflect much credit on the Derry press.

The series of tracts and manifestoes, which he issued against the principles of the Reformed Presbytery, are only known to me from the references in *Homesius Enervatus*, a reply written to one of them by the Rev. William James, the first Reformed Presbyterian minister of Bready. These publications were called forth by the fact that the Reformed ministers were then striving to form, as they had already done at Bready, a new congregation on the Faughan, in the very centre of Mr. Holmes's people. In the tracts which he published, so far as we can gather from Mr. James, Holmes charges the Reformed ministers with narrowing the terms of Christian communion, and with holding heterodox opinions; but the writer seems disposed to attach too much importance to mere rumour and to vague accusation. From the matter, tone, and circumstances of these publications, I feel strongly inclined to identify the anonymous writer noticed in ch. xc. with the Rev. John Holmes. It will be seen that the *Querics to Nairn* appeared in 1744, the year in which Mr. Holmes

was installed in Glendermot. Of these pamphlets, and of his *Answer to Nelson*, a few insignificant fragments are preserved by James.

His last production, issued under a fictitious signature that has a Hebrew sound, but the allusion of which I do not clearly understand, is his *Remarks on the Synodical Sermon* of 1770. It is a critique on some New Light principles, which had been lately avowed by Gilbert Kennedy (see ch. lxi.), and the Rev. James Hull of Bangor (see ch. xc.); but, like his sermon, it is printed on paper of the quality now used for street ballads.

Mr. Holmes died on the 15th of May, 1773. Judging from a remark stated incidentally in *Homesius Enervatus*, which was published the year before he died, I conclude that he was never married.\*

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#### STATE OF RELIGION IN 1764.

The above specified reasons have moved the author to disburthen his conscience by publishing to the world the ensuing discourse, to be a testimony against the torrent of defection that hath entered into the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, which he looks upon to be the fruit of the Non-subscribing principle that disturbed the General Synod of Ulster above forty years ago, and was the occasion of making a schism in our Church, which was once famous for unity and purity, but is now become infamous for scandalous divisions and corrupt principles. Too many of her seers seem to be covered with that judicial blindness of mind which the Lord inflicted upon the teachers of the Jewish Church in Isaiah's time, ch. xxix. 10, xlii. 19, and in our Saviour's time, Matt. xxiii. Too many who handle the law know not God, Jer. ii. 8; they have corrupted the covenant of Levi, in respect of both principle and practice, like the priests in Malachi's time, and thereby have made many stumble at the law. And some have made themselves base and contemptible in the eyes of the godly, for their way of preaching and conversing with people in private by disputing against truth, and for their scandalous practices, such as playing cards and attending playhouses, and for their light behaviour, that is inconsistent with ministerial gravity. So that these words of Malachi, ch. ii. 8, concerning the priests in his time, are very

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod of Ulster*: MS. *Minutes of Letterkenny Presbytery*: *Homesius Enervatus*: Holmes' *Sermon and Remarks*: Reid's MS. *Catalogue*.

applicable to too many ministers at this time, "Ye have departed out of the way;" which should be matter of lamentation to us, for, as Poole saith on Lam. iv. 13, an ungodly ministry is a great plague and curse to a people.—*Preface to Sermon*, p. ix.

#### MORAL DIFFERENT FROM SPIRITUAL GOODNESS.

As all moral goodness consists in the practice of virtue, so all spiritual goodness consists in the supernatural principle of spiritual life, that is implanted in a man's soul in his conversion and regeneration, and in the exertment of that principle, or in the exercise of all the graces of the Spirit in the performance of religion. In a word, it consists in the practice of piety and goodness, so that there is a great difference betwixt moral and spiritual goodness, as great as betwixt light and darkness (Eph. v. 8), or there is a great difference betwixt a good moral man and a good Christian. They differ essentially in respect of their natures. The moralist hath only the old nature still remaining in him, or the old man which is corrupt; but the good Christian hath put off the old man with his deeds, and hath put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of God (Col. iii. 10). Although the moralist be embellished and ornamented with a good natural temper and disposition, with kind benevolent affection and all sorts of moral virtue, yet the old unrepented nature still remains in him, he is still in the gall of bitterness, the seed of the old serpent, no better than some of the Pharisees, who were good moralists, and yet they were the children of the devil (John viii. 44)—a generation of vipers (Matt. xxiii. 33). This is the wretched and miserable state and condition of all mankind by original sin, both imputed and inherent (Rom. v. 18; Ps. v. 5). They are all the children of wrath while they continue in that state (Eph. ii. 3). This is the judgment of sound divines, and particularly of those who compiled the W. C. of Faith, as is clear from Chapter V. and from the answer to the eighteenth question of the Shorter Catechism, and of those who compiled the Articles of the Established Church of Ireland in Bp. Ussher's time, as is clear from the Article on Original Sin. So that the best moralist in the world is in a dangerous state; while he continues in a state of nature, he is a child of wrath; though he be beautified and adorned with the fair paint of virtue, and gilded over with a specious show of religion, yet he is but like one of the apples of Sodom, that had a beautiful outside, but inwardly were foul, rotten stuff; or like a whited sepulchre (Matt. xxiii. 27).—*Sermon on Rom. v. 7*, p. 12.

#### EXTRACTS FROM "TERMS OF CHURCH COMMUNION."

[From page 7.]

As every community or corporation hath terms of admission to the privileges of it, so the Church of God, being a spiritual cor-

puration, hath terms of communion that should be observed or submitted to in order to be entitled to her privileges. Some make the terms of her religious communion too wide, allowing a promiscuous admission of all sorts of Christians to Church privileges; others make them too narrow, as the Reformed Presbytery.

[From pages 9, 10.]

Their terms are very exceptional, especially their terms of Christian communion, the first whereof is their making the Confession of Faith a term of Christian communion.

[From pages 8, 9, 10.]

There are many things hard in it to be understood [viz., the Bible and Confession of Faith], and consequently all that assent to Divine truths which they cannot fully understand are actuated by a blind and implicit faith.—*Quoted in "Homesius,"* pp. 21, 23, 24.

#### EXTRACTS FROM ANSWER TO NELSON.

[From pages 9, 10.]

'Tis matter of admiration that Mr. Nelson hath represented the Westminster Assembly to have been of such generous and enlarged sentiments, that they have clearness to keep communion with all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; since the very scope and intent of some places of the Confession is to bear a testimony against latitudinarian principles, and consequently against a promiscuous catholic communion with all who profess Christianity. They were so far from maintaining the innocence of error, that they accounted some principles damnable heresies, such as Socinianism, that too many seem to be infected with at this time.

[From same page.]

We should keep at a distance from persons that are scandalous in respect either of principle or practice. And [3d sect. 24 chap. Conf.] they did not allow a godly man to enter into a marriage covenant with a person who maintains damnable heresies. They allow such as are infected with dangerous errors to be cast out of the Church, as is clear from some of the Scriptures that are quoted to prove the 4th sect. of the 26th chapter. And since they allowed erroneous persons to be cast out of the Church, much more did they allow them to be kept out. For it is easier to keep a thief out of the house than to turn him out when he is in.—*Quoted in "Homesius,"* pp. 47, 48.



## SCOPE OF SOME SYNODICAL SERMONS.

Now from these sermons, that are so highly valued by the General Synod, it plainly appears that the design of them is to lay aside the W. C. of Faith from being a term of ministerial communion, and thereby let all errors into the Church, except atheism and deism, without any opposition, under a specious pretence of honouring God's Word and the perfection of His law, and of preserving peace, love, and unity among Christians. Which reminds me of what Mr. Davidson said in an Assembly of the Church of Scotland, when some were pleading for liberty to allow some ministers of the Gospel to sit in Parliament, to take care (as they pretended) of the affairs of the Church, but their real design was to introduce Prelacy. "I see," saith he, "the knave lifting up his mitred head." Many sinful designs have been projected and carried on under a cloak of religion.

Mr. Hull and his brethren are very careful and diligent in putting an end to debates in the Church and recommending peace; whereas their fathers of the *Belfast Society* were the original source and spring of them, and they follow their fathers' footsteps very exactly, for they are the occasion of reviving our old debates, and are impatient of contradiction, and are displeased with any who endeavour to defend the truth, that is now fallen in our streets. Such are accounted disturbers of the Church, as Elijah was by Ahab. We should live peaceably with all men, as long as we can do it without betraying truth by sinful silence; but as Jehu said to Joram, who said, "Is it peace?"—"What peace so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?" So what peace can men expect when they publish their erroneous sentiments, that were the witchcrafts that bewitched the Galatians, and made the Apostle afraid that he had bestowed labour upon them in vain.

Moreover, as the scope of their sermons is a disapprobation of our Confession as a test of orthodoxy, so it condemns those eminent divines who composed it for that end, and it virtually condemns all who have subscribed it, such as most of the General Synod have done, either sincerely or deceitfully. . . .

Lastly, I am sorry that Mr. Michael Bruce did not imitate the good and laudable example of Robert Bruce, who was in his time a strong pillar in the Church of Scotland, to whom this encomium is given in history, that he was *strenuus Christi miles, vir genere et virtute nobilis, et majestate vultus venerabilis*. And it is a matter of regret that Mr. Gilbert Kennedy is so far degenerate from his father's principles, who was an able champion for truth, to whom the honourable epitaph is due that Buchanan gave the Earl of Cassilis—

"Hic situs est heros, humili Gilbertus in urna,  
Kennedus antiquæ nobilitatis honos."

—*Rhem Tamim's Remarks*, pp. 22-24.



## CHAPTER LXVIII.

ISAAC WELD, D.D. (1732—1778),

MINISTER AT DUBLIN (EUSTACE STREET).

1. *A Sermon* preached at Eustace Street, 26th of January, 1766, on occasion of the much lamented death of the Reverend and Learned John Leland, D.D., who departed this life 16th January, 1766, in the 75th year of his age. 12mo, pp. 38. *Dublin*, 1766. [Heb. xiii. 7, 8.] A. C. B.
2. *Sketch of Dr. Leland* [prefixed to Dr. Leland's Posthumous Sermons]. pp. xlii. *London*, 1769. T. W.

DR. ISAAC WELD was son of the Rev. Nathaniel Weld, minister of New Row, Dublin (1682—1730), whom we have already noticed (see ch. xiv.). He was born in 1710, and was called Isaac after Sir Isaac Newton, for whom his father entertained great admiration and friendship. He was educated at the academy which Dr. Francis Hutcheson, before he became Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University, conducted in Dublin. He afterwards proceeded to Glasgow, and subsequently to London, in order to complete his education.

His father died in 1730, two years before Mr. Isaac Weld had finished his preparation for the ministry; and the congregation, which in 1726 had removed from New Row into their new church in Eustace Street, waited for him two years before making choice of a minister. In 1732 he was chosen and ordained as colleague to Dr. Leland, and for many years enjoyed the confidence and friendship of that excellent man, with whom he was in constant intercourse.

The only published works of Dr. Weld are those which originated in his connection with Dr. Leland, the *Funeral Sermon* which he preached after his death, and the biographical sketch which he prefixed to his posthumous sermons. He himself died in February, 1778. Dr. Armstrong says of him that he "sustained the character inherited from his forefathers by a life of unblemished worth."

Dr. Weld left two sons, Isaac and Richard, who started in business in London, but who proved unfortunate. The Church in some degree suffered by them. When they failed in 1779, the *Minutes* of the Synod of Ulster of that year inform us they had one year of Synod's additional Regium Donum in their hands, and the Synod, through its Moderator, had to sign an agreement giving its consent that the affairs of the Messrs. Weld might be vested in trustees for the benefit of their creditors. Isaac afterwards obtained a lucrative appointment in Dublin Castle, which he held till his death in 1824; and soon afterwards Richard also died suddenly, when visiting a friend confined in the Tower of London.

Dr. Weld's grandsons obtained some literary distinction. His son Isaac by his first wife, Elizabeth Kerr, whom he married in 1773, had a son called, after his father and grandfather, *Isaac*, who published in 1795-97 *Travels in North America and Canada*, and in 1807 *Illustrations of the Scenery of Killarney and the Surrounding Country*. By his second wife, Lucy Powell, of Great Connel, in County Kildare, whom he married in 1812, he had another son, Charles Richard Weld, who became still more distinguished. He was born in 1813. After spending a considerable part of his boyhood in France, he was elected in 1839 assistant secretary to the Statistical Society of London. He spent much of his time at Ravenswell near Dublin, the residence of his half-brother. In 1844 he was called to the bar, and in the following year he was appointed assistant secretary and librarian to the Royal Society of London, a position that he held till 1861. The

work by which he is best known is his *History of the Royal Society*, in two volumes, published in 1848. He was a frequent contributor to *Fraser*, and to other periodicals, and was the author of several books of travel and vacation rambles on the Continent, in America, and at home. Alfred Tennyson, the poet, is his brother-in-law. A fall which when a young man he received at Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, injured his spine, and made him a delicate man for life. He died in January, 1869.\*

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#### LAST DAYS OF DR. LELAND.

This improved state of health continued till some months ago, when he felt symptoms which were thought the presage of a painful chronic disease. These appearances, however, by skilful advice and proper medicines, abated; and as he was advised to walk as the properest exercise for him, he got cold in a moist day, which he neglected till it fixed in his breast, and raised an inflammation there. And then, notwithstanding all that art or tenderness could do, the disorder soon overpowered his weak and feeble frame. But his intellectual powers were unimpaired and lively to the last. He had the sentence of death in himself, and had no notion that he could recover, though his friends, when he got any ease, flattered themselves with the hope of it. With a head perfectly clear, and a mind quite easy and composed, he gave directions for what he thought proper to be done; and spent his time in most affecting exhortations to those who were about him, and in adoring the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence towards him. He said the mercies he had received from God were more than could be numbered; and though he had been exercised with various afflictions, he trusted that, in the issue, they had proved real blessings. He discovered great humility in acknowledging his manifold infirmities and defects. "Whatever others may think of me," said he, "I, who have reason to know myself best, am sensible I have made but a small progress in righteousness and true holiness, or even in knowledge and learning, in comparison with what I might have done, if I had been careful to make the best use of my time, and of the means and opportunities that have been put into my hands." Thus lowly was this good man! And most devoutly did he celebrate the riches of Divine grace through Jesus Christ. "I give my dying testimony," said he, with a kind of emotion, "to the truth of Christianity. The precious promises

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod: Armstrong's Sketches: Preface to Weld's Notes on Burgundy.*

of the Gospel are my support and consolation. They alone yield true satisfaction in a dying hour. I am not afraid to die. The Gospel of Christ has raised me above the fear of it. For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

A little before he died, he was raised up, and with his own hands took some refreshment, and lay down again composed to rest; when in less than six minutes, without any agony or struggle, without a sigh or groan, he quietly breathed his last, and fell asleep in the Lord. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."—*Funeral Sermon*, pp. 29-31.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

WILLIAM WARNOCK (1747—1768),

MINISTER OF DONAGHADEE.

*The Nature and Effects of Simplicity and Godly Sincerity*, as opposed to fleshly wisdom, in the character and conversation of a Godly Minister. Synodical Sermon at Lurgan, June 30, 1767. [2 Cor. i. 12.] pp. 35. *Belfast*, 1767. M. M. N.

THE REV. WILLIAM WARNOCK, previously a licentiate of the Presbytery of Killeleagh, was ordained by the Presbytery of Bangor as minister of Donaghadee on the 20th of May, 1747. He was the third minister in succession to the Rev. Andrew Stewart, already noticed (see ch. iii.).

In 1766 Mr. Warnock was chosen Moderator of Synod; and when resigning office the following year, he preached, and subsequently published, the discourse which entitles him to a place in these pages. Having pointed out in the introduction the design with which the words of the text were used, he proceeds to contrast godly sincerity and fleshly wisdom in their nature and effects. Sincerity, he thinks, will lead a minister to interpret Scripture in accordance with the ideas of the Divine perfections derived from the works of nature, so as to reject with abhorrence all notions of God being partial in His benevolence, rigorous in His demands, or vindictive in His anger: fleshly wisdom, on the other hand, directs men to "taking up matters as they find them in creeds and confessions made up by others to their hands, and, of whatever sect or church they are.

to mark what passeth there for soundest and most orthodox." Fleshly wisdom is indifferent to the spiritual improvement of mankind here and to their condition hereafter: godly sincerity must ever hold such criminal indifference in abhorrence. He then proceeds to show that a consciousness of simplicity and godly sincerity, established and prevailing in their hearts and lives, must prove a never-failing source of consolation and rejoicing to Gospel ministers. In the conclusion he makes improvement of the subject, by confirming his brethren in the abhorrence of every disingenuous way, and in the exercise of godly sincerity in all the various branches of their ministerial duty. He who exerts his powers to discover the will of God in the Bible is a much safer guide, than he who follows with blind implicit faith the authority of men. He ends by a solemn appeal to all to do their duty, to make full proof of their ministry, and to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Notwithstanding a slight tinge of New Light thought running through and colouring the sermon, it contains much advice that is sound and practical and good.

Mr. Warnock died very shortly after the termination of his Moderatorship, on the 19th of January, 1768.

The memorial sent by his congregation to the Presbytery immediately after his death has been preserved, and is so creditable to the congregation and to him, that I cannot deny it a place in this record, more particularly as it illustrates the quaint and formal manner in which congregations transacted business with Presbytery in the last century:—

*To the Rev. Presbytery of Bangor to meet at Drumbo.*

The humble supplication of the congregation of Donaghadee sheweth, that your supplicants being now deprived by the Divine disposal of the wholesome instructions of our late most worthy pastor, the loss of whose uncommon abilities to instruct, whose courteous mild demeanour, whose sincere and unwearied labours, we can never sufficiently regret; and as his memory can never by us be too much revered, we would propose to your wisdom to continue the payment of the usual stipend to his family one year at least; and in case we should not then be determined in our



choice of another minister, to continue the payment of the same until we have the near prospect of one settled amongst us. And we earnestly entreat your wisdoms to appoint some of your number to supply us at the least one every third Sabbath, and that you will please on the remaining Sabbaths to send us your probationers. And your supplicants as in duty bound shall ever pray, &c.

Read in our Meeting-house in presence of the whole congregation, and signed by their order, this 24th of January, 1768, by  
SAMUEL YOUNG, *S. Clk.*

We nominate and appoint our trusty and well-beloved friends, Messrs. William Adams, William Mabane, and Charles Kelly, to wait on your Rev. Presbytery at Drumbo the 27th inst., to present to you the above supplication, and there to act and do in our stead what your wisdoms may judge further necessary, as if we were all personally present.

Signed by order, January 24th, 1768, by SAMUEL YOUNG, *S. Clk.*

That the above writing was this day publicly read in the congregation of Donaghadee, and that there was an universal concurrence with respect to the purport of it, without one dissenting voice, is attested, January 24th, 1768, by

JAMES HUEY [Minister at Newtownards].  
WILLIAM ADAMS.  
WILLIAM MABANE.  
CHARLES KELLY.\*

It is much to be regretted that so few details are known of one who seems to have been a minister of ability and worth.†

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#### THE SPIRITUAL GOOD OF OTHERS.

Now among all the tender, the compassionate, and generous offices that can be done for others, those which tend to promote the improvement of the mind in wisdom, holiness, and goodness, are incomparably the most substantial and important. All other offices, however friendly and sympathising in their effects, terminate upon and perish with the body. Whereas these for their object have the true perfection and felicity of the superior immortal part; and, in their happy consequences to the children of wisdom, shall survive the dissolution of the earthly frame, and be experienced with joy unspeakable and full of glory while eternity endures. And to be conscious now of faithfully endeavouring

\* Extracted from MS. *Minutes* of Presbytery of Bangor of January 27, 1768.

† *Minutes* of Synod of Ulster, and Reid's MS. *Catalogue*.

to serve others in this way, by the united powers of doctrine, precept, and example, together with the various affecting motives of the Gospel, studying to train them up for glory, honour, and immortality ;—how joyful must it prove to the sincere and well-disposed heart ! Nor is this all ; for as these offices do thus surpass all others in the importance and duration of their beneficial consequences, so are they upon several accounts exceeding difficult in the performance. The poor and indigent are ever ready to receive with open hands and grateful hearts the friendly aid of such as are disposed to minister to their necessities. The advice and prescriptions of an able and faithful physician are also, in the general, cordially received and complied with by such as languish under painful or threatening bodily diseases. While they who labour to promote the well-being of the immortal mind, to supply its wants, to rectify its errors, to remove its disorders, and to build it up in all the principles, the ornaments, and excellences of the spiritual, the Divine, nature and life, are oftentimes exposed to keen resentment and disgust from those whose highest interest they are with all sincerity and faithfulness endeavouring to serve.—*Sermon*, pp. 25, 26.

## CHAPTER LXX

JOHN CAMERON, M.A. (1755—1799),

MINISTER OF DUNLUCE.

1. *The Policy of Satan* to destroy the Christian Religion. [*Anonymous.*] Dedicated to Common Sense, Esq. pp. 68. *London*, [1767]. A. C. B.
2. *The Messiah*; an Epic in nine books. *Belfast*, 1768. [A Second Edition, with a brief Memoir of the Author prefixed, was issued at Dublin in 1811. 12mo, pp. 356.] T. W.
3. *The Catholic Christian*; or, True Religion Sought and Found, by Theophilus Philander. pp. 67. *Belfast*, 1769. T. W.
4. *The Catholic Christian Defended*, in a Letter to the Rev. Benjamin M'Dowell, by Philalethes. pp. 71. *Belfast*, 1771. T. W.
5. *Theophilus and Philander*; a Dialogue containing Remarks on the Rev. Mr. M'Dowell's second Letter to the supposed Author of the *Catholic Christian*. pp. 38. *Belfast*, 1772. T. W.
6. *Forms of Devotion*, composed chiefly in Scripture Language. *Belfast*, 1780.
7. *The Doctrines of Orthodoxy* recommended to the serious consideration of all Christians. pp. 27. *Belfast*, 1782. [This was republished in 1817 under the title *The Skeleton Covered with Flesh.*]
8. *The State of our First Parents* in Eden impartially considered, compared with that of their posterity in the world.
9. *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures* concerning the only True God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. [This work was posthumous.] pp. 117. *London*, 1828. C. P. L.

JOHN CAMERON was born near Edinburgh. His boyhood was passed as an apprentice in a bookseller's shop of that city, and he afterwards studied in its University.

About 1752 he came to Ireland as a probationer of the Reformed Presbytery, then popularly known as the Mountain-men, and for several years after he itinerated as an outdoor preacher through various districts of Ulster. At that time he was a man of undoubted orthodoxy, and being an able speaker as well, his ministrations proved very acceptable to the people. In 1754 a division took place in the ancient congregation of Billy or Bushmills, then under the ministry of the Rev. John Logue, and the new congregation made overtures to the Reformed probationer, that if he would join the Presbytery of Route, with which they were in ecclesiastical connection, they would lose no time in giving him a call. Mr. Cameron consented.\* The Presbytery received him, and prescribed to him the usual course of trials preliminary to ordination. Among these was a portion of Scripture, on which he was to have a discourse prepared for the next meeting. Having ascertained that the court would not conclude its sittings for some time, the young minister retired, and in little more than an hour returned, and delivered a sermon on the passage appointed, which the Presbytery accepted as sufficient evidence of his ability to instruct a congregation.

On the 3d of June, 1755, Cameron was ordained as minister of Dunluce. He proved to be an able preacher, an assiduous pastor, and a diligent student; but unfortunately he became infected with the New Light divinity, then held by various ministers of the Synod, and which in his case ripened into Arianism.

The following account, which he gives of his change of principles, deserves to be quoted, as showing the amount of evil that may be done by what seems in itself a very innocent transaction :—

“I had been invited,” says he, “to dine with a dignitary of the Established Church, when, after dinner, as both of us were

\* A copy of the call, with the names of 137 members of the congregation attached, and dated “Dunluce, April 24th, 1755,” is printed in a broad sheet opposite the title-page of his posthumous work, *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures*.

men of literary inquiry, the Churchman said to me, 'Cameron, have you seen Taylor of Norwich on *Original Sin*?' 'No,' was my reply, 'nor do I wish to see it; it is a most dangerous production, and I have often cautioned my flock against its new-fangled doctrines.' 'I shall give it to you,' said the divine, 'when you are returning home.' On my retiring, the dignitary said, 'Cameron, you have forgotten the book, but I shall bring it to you.' With great reluctance did I remain until it was put into my hand, and I declare such was my aversion to it, that I would as soon have been accompanied by his satanic majesty. Next morning I commenced a perusal of this production. As I advanced, a new and wonderful light broke in upon my mind. The author's exposition of Scripture, and the illustration of the doctrine proposed, was so exceedingly simple and rational, and so consistent with the Word of God, that I never met with anything that made such an impression upon my mind. For a few days I laid the book aside, pondering and revolving in my mind its important contents. I then resumed the perusal, carefully collating every text with the original, and comparing it with the Word of God. The result was a complete and entire change in my religious sentiments." \*

This book of Taylor's, which made such an impression upon Cameron, is that which soon after was ground to powder by Jonathan Edwards in his treatise on *Original Sin*, with the result that few have been hurt by it ever since. Cameron had not, however, the advantage of reading Edwards, and in reading Taylor he found himself in the grasp of a mind more powerful than his own, whose plausible sophistries he was unable to answer. The incident shows, moreover, how much more easy it is to do harm than to do good, and that sound doctrine as well as good manners may be corrupted by our giving ready access to evil communications. Influenced by the society in which we mingle, and to some extent influencing it in return, we are constantly ourselves receiving, or giving forth to others, impressions for good or evil—a fact which reminds a Christian that he is bound to beware as well as to be active.

It could scarcely be supposed that a man of such vigorous mind and active temperament as Cameron, would not seek in due time a larger audience for his opinions than could be afforded by a rural parish. His first published work, *The Policy of Satan to Destroy the*

\* Preface to *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures*, p. viii.

*Christian Religion*, appeared anonymously at London in 1767. It represents the author walking by the sea-shore—we may suppose on that magnificent strand which runs from the skirt of his parish to the beautiful marine village of Portrush—and the genius of poetic inspiration and the genius of history joining him in his walk. Then and there these two celestial spirits reveal to him the whole plot that the devils in council have laid for corrupting and destroying Christianity, namely, tempting the Emperor Constantine to enrich the clergy, the Pope to assert his merely human authority, the Reformed Churches to enforce creeds and confessions, and Christians to persecute each other.

Had the authorship of such a work been avowed, its publication would have drawn public attention to the writer, and would have been fatal to his attainment of official position in any orthodox body. But the Synod at that time was not very careful about maintaining its character for orthodoxy, as is shown by the fact that in 1768 it received a report from the Non-subscribing Presbytery of Antrim—the first instance of ecclesiastical communion which had occurred between the two bodies since 1726. That same year Mr. Cameron was placed in the Moderator's chair. He signalled his year of office by an act in which he has never had an imitator, namely, by the publication of a prose epic in nine books, called *The Messiah*. The subject is the betrayal, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus, embodying the main facts of the Scripture narrative in a sort of imaginative way, and expressed in the poetical prose form that the poems of Ossian have made familiar, but on a plan evidently suggested by *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. The work affords evidence of creative power, imagination, and even genius, but fails of what the author says was its design, "to amuse and to instruct;" the subject is too sacred for amusement, and the treatment is too fictitious and poetical for instruction. *The Messiah*, however, was republished at Dublin in 1811, and still finds readers, attracted to it not by its poetry but by the uniqueness of its form, which makes



it a literary curiosity. To the Dublin edition there is prefixed an anonymous sketch of the author's life, not, indeed, minutely accurate, but preserving some interesting details which we have embodied in the present notice.

In the year 1769, Mr. Cameron published *The Catholic Christian*, a little treatise, neatly and cleverly written, designed to show the evils of creeds and confessions. It represents Theophilus Philander, a fictitious character to whom the author ascribes sentiments evidently his own, as making a sort of search for the true religion. He finds something good and something wrong in the different Christian denominations, and determines to test them by ascertaining which of them will admit him to membership, on his professing to believe the Scriptures, and to try to live up to the rules of life which the Scriptures prescribe. He tries in succession a Romish priest, an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, a Seceder, and a Covenanter; but he is rejected by all, on the ground that, in addition to the Scriptures, he will not receive that creed or interpretation of the Scriptures adopted by the Church which each of these ministers represents. He thinks his case very hard, that, although he believes the Scriptures, yet no Church will admit him to communion, except he will consent also to the human standard which it has drawn up. He then hears of a minister of a certain Christian society, who professes to be of no party. He is evidently the representative of the New Light, though not so designated in the book; and forthwith to this Catholic Christian, Theophilus repairs. From him he gets a full explanation. He is told that Christ and His Apostles never would have thought of asking more than he professed to give; that when differences of opinion arose in the Church, there are only two remedies for them—either mutual forbearance or ecclesiastical authority to determine all controversies; that the clergy of successive ages, both Romish and Protestant, preferred the latter, and that this led to the production of creeds; that the enforcement of these

creeds by civil penalties is the cause of persecution ; and that even when not enforced by the civil power, they often stereotype error, instead of keeping it out, and make it the interest of men to defend it. Church authority is the source of doctrinal corruption, and creeds are the symbols of party. Sects would be abolished if the only terms of communion were belief of the Scriptures and a virtuous life, and all disciples of Christ would receive each other as Christ received them. What, it may be asked, is to be done with heretics ? In the judgment of the Catholic Christian, there is no heretic except a hypocrite—" *no mistaken opinions will render a man a heretic in the sight of God, while his heart is sincere and his life such as becometh a Christian.*" This sentiment is the keynote of the book. Mere doctrinal errors are only differences of opinion ; a wicked life is the worst heresy ; and if a man is only sincere and honest, nobody under God has a right to ask him what his opinions are. Whether what a man believes is truth or falsehood is a minor matter, that concerns only himself.

A plausible pamphlet containing such objectionable sentiments as these, could not be allowed to pass without notice, more particularly as the authorship was very well known. An answer in defence of subscription appeared the following year from the Rev. Benjamin M'Dowell, a young minister settled a few years before in the congregation of Ballykelly. In 1771, Mr. Cameron responded in his *Catholic Christian Defended*. So hard was he pressed by his antagonist, that he is obliged to have recourse to all his skill and dexterity in order to keep his ground. He points out that M'Dowell does not defend subscription to the Westminster Confession, but only to an imaginary creed containing all the essentials of salvation ; but then he changes his position, and throws overboard the instruction of the Catholic Christian by professing his willingness to sign a creed that contains nothing but essentials, when M'Dowell shall produce it. As his original objection was to *any* creed of human com-

position, it was not necessary for M'Dowell, in order to meet this, to defend the Westminster symbol in particular, and as Cameron is forced to admit that his only obstacle in signing a human creed is the supposed inability to produce one which contains nothing but essentials, it is quite obvious that M'Dowell has the best of the argument. This called forth a *Second Letter* from the minister of Ballykelly, to which, in 1772, Mr. Cameron replied in his *Theophilus and Philander, a Dialogue*. By suppressing his name and writing as an extern party, he had the advantage of enlarging on the strong points of his own case, attacking the weakest of the adversary, and passing in silence over everything which it was not convenient to notice. And yet it is evident from this dialogue, that in his young antagonist he has met a man more than his match. The most of what he attempts is to point out inconsistencies in Mr. M'Dowell, and to run out his statements to some extreme consequences, with a view of showing their absurdity; but in this tractate he does very little indeed to defend his original position, namely, that the Scriptures themselves supersede the necessity of any human creed; that error is only evidence of a weak understanding, and not criminal in itself; and that no man ought to be excluded from church communion except for wickedness of heart, evidenced in immorality of life. His method is unsatisfactory. He puts weak statements of weak arguments in the mouth of the orthodox speaker, and of course brings his friend the New Light champion off victorious.

A variety of other works proceeded from the pen of Mr. Cameron. One of these was a devotional treatise, mostly expressed in Scripture language, which was published in 1780. This was followed in 1782 by the *Doctrines of Orthodoxy*, a treatise republished in 1817 under the name *The Skeleton Covered with Flesh*. The *State of our First Parents in Eden* is a scarce book: I have never seen a copy.

Mr. Cameron at his death left two important works

in manuscript. One of them, *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures concerning the True God*, was published so recently as 1828 by the Rev. Arthur Neilson of Redemon. The design of it is to bring forward, which it does in a cursory and superficial manner, the main passages of Scripture in regard to the Son of God, with the view of deducing from them the usual Arian doctrine. The other is a work on the *Millennium*, which was written so early as 1785, but which was never published, owing to the disturbed state of the country and to some political statements and allusions in the book, which were judged to be unseasonable. Whether this MS. is still in existence, I have not been able to ascertain.

In addition to his printed works, Mr. Cameron produced many sermons carefully elaborated and written out at full length. He gave none of them to the press, but was so obliging as to lend them in manuscript to his neighbours, who, in the degenerate state of the Church at that time, did not scruple to make such use of them, that it is said the pastor of Dunluce preached virtually sometimes to half a dozen congregations on the same day.

Towards the end of 1799, the last days of a retired and laborious literary life drew to a close. The answer which he gave to a Methodist, who visited him in his last illness, betrays the most lamentable darkness in regard to the Gospel salvation; but it is quite possible that it may be very imperfectly reported. His neighbour asked him whether he had attained the faith of assurance. "I cannot be positive," Mr. Cameron is reported to have said, "only this much I know, that I have endeavoured to keep the commandments of God, and therefore have firm hope in the mercy of God through the merits of Jesus Christ." We would wish to believe that, as he neared the border of the unseen, he rose to sounder and clearer views. He died on the 31st of December, 1799, and was laid to rest in the old graveyard of Dunluce, within sound of the surging wave, that breaks at the foot of the crag on which

stands the ancient Castle of M'Quillan. The inscription on his tombstone is:—

“Sacred to the memory of the late Rev., learned, pious, and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, John Cameron, forty-five years Dissenting Minister in the parish of Dunluce. He died 31st December, 1799, aged 75 years. This erected by his son William.”

His son William, who erected the tombstone, was a buttonmaker in Birmingham, and a member of Dr. Priestley's congregation there. This connection led to a correspondence between the two ministers, and it is said by some who are acute in detecting remote analogies and similarities, that traces of Cameron's influence are discernible in some of Priestley's published works.

I remember standing with Professor Croskery at the humble gravestone on the 6th of July, 1869, and copying the above inscription. At an earlier date, a gentleman who felt a sympathy for Mr. Cameron's peculiar opinions that I can never feel, stood at the same spot, and gave expression to his sentiments in the following pleasant lines:—

“Peace to his gentle spirit ! In his day  
He fought the fight of pure ennobling faith,  
And now he sleeps in Christ. His race is run,  
And his the hope that maketh not ashamed.”\*

The tradition of the neighbourhood still bears witness to Mr. Cameron's great scholarship and reputation, but adds that through life he had rather more than a common share of domestic trials.

“Possessed of great abilities,” says his biographer, “had this amiable man been placed in such a situation as would have elicited and fostered his genius, there is reason to believe that he would have stood in the first rank of his profession. But placed in a retired country congregation, with little to call forth the exertions of his mind, he spent his days in discharging the duties of his sacred vocation. His manners were placid,

\* Lines written at the grave of the Rev. John Cameron by Rev. George Hill. See *Bible Christian* for 1837, p. 203.



amiable, and interesting; and in him religion shone forth with unaffected grace."

"His lofty tone of expression," says Mr. Neilson, "his energetic manner of address, the fluency and fervour of his language, and above all the strong sensibility which he could not control, especially in treating of matters deeply interesting and pathetic, rendered him a preacher whom few could hear without profound attention and powerful emotion. In his habits and manners he was entirely primitive and simple, studious in the extreme, seldom, if ever, entering on the cares and concerns of the world. Hence his circumstances were very limited; yet the good providence of God never suffered him to be in absolute want; and there are many instances on record which, while they bear testimony to his estimable character, bespeak the purest feelings of Christian love on the part of his benefactors."\*

Cameron was the most advanced Arian that had as yet appeared in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. His posthumous book, *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures*, is very repulsive reading to any man of orthodox opinions; but it is scarcely fair to judge a man by a work, for whose publication he is not himself responsible.

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#### THOUGHTS BY THE SEASIDE.

There are certain times and places, certain situations and circumstances in human life, more favourable than others to study and contemplation. When the mind is at ease and the passions settled into a calm serenity, when solitude and silence, rugged and impending rocks, a clear sky, and peaceful ocean, present themselves; when the scene is thus diversified with objects of novelty, beauty, and grandeur, an agreeable melancholy diffuseth itself over the mind and favours a thoughtful disposition. In such a situation I lately indulged a lonely walk. Having the immense ocean on the one hand, with a range of awful mountains on the other, the following soliloquy engaged my attention.

\* MS. *Minutes* of Synod of Ulster: Reid's MS. *Catalogue*: Cameron's *Works*: *Life*, prefixed to the Dublin edition of *The Messiah*: Neilson's Preface to *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures*.



The religion of Jesus, how lovely does it appear as recorded in the New Testament. The facts on which it is built are well attested. Its miracles at once astonish and convince me, that they were performed by the power of God. Its prophecies discover a Divine foresight, which the revolutions of time have abundantly confirmed. Its doctrines bear the test of impartial reason, while its precepts are equally consistent with the Divine perfections and the happiness of human nature. Such a religion as this cannot be the result of imposture. No; it must have descended from the Author of every good and perfect gift. But, alas! what effect has it produced among men? When I consider this religion as professed by so many parties, and established in the different kingdoms of the earth, it appears to have been an endless bone of contention, a source of discord, animosity, wars, and bloodshed. Can a religion from heaven be the plague of human society? Can the gift of God be the curse of the world? This religion must either be the invention of wicked men, or wicked men must have perverted it to such abominable purposes. The first supposition to every impartial mind will evidently appear impossible. The latter then must be the case. And the causes of perversion justly claim the most serious consideration. But where shall I begin, or who can inform me when or by what means the degeneracy has been carried on or supported? Here I am at a loss. The Apostles of Jesus have indeed foretold that Antichrist would come, that men would depart from the faith, having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it.

While I thus continued in solitary conversation, there came up behind me two persons of an uncommon aspect, both ancient and venerable, the one active, sprightly, and cheerful, the other more solemn, grave, and majestic. I started with surprise, and blushed to be found talking aloud without any companion. They easily discerned the cause of my confusion, and begged I would be no longer upon the reserve; declaring with what pleasure they found me engaged in such meditations, and how willing they were to explain the difficulties that embarrassed my thoughts.—*The Policy of Satan*, pp. 5-8.

#### MEETING OF GABRIEL AND RAPHAEL IN THE AIR.

No sooner had the angel Gabriel comforted the Messiah, than he ascended through the liquid sky, nor stayed his rapid flight till he reached the smooth yielding surface of the aerial flood, and stood erect, as on a sea of glass, diffused around this gross teraqueous globe. Here in the vast circumference of the atmosphere, ten thousand clouds are found and disappear, raised by the solar heat in every clime, from earth below, and from the watery deeps. Here thunders roar with awful voice and fly around on wings of flaming fire. From hence the rain distils in gentle showers or falls precipitate in rapid floods, the rattling

hail or fleecy snow descends upon the earth. Here cold and heat and moist and dry, convened in dusky vapours, swim o'er the hills or fly in wild confusion while the tempest roars : when rarefied they mount on high, and melt into liquid air ; but if condensed, they quickly fall and pour their contents on the verdant plains. It is only in the lower regions, over the land and sea, where these stormy vapours hold their furious reign ; but far above the thin transparent air is pure and peaceful, even to the utmost verge, where the refined ether fills the ambient space. Here angels breathe immortal life and joy, and here they stand or walk or fly which way they will, independent of all material attraction. From thence they view the various ways of men, as we behold with curious eyes the creeping insects in the bottom of a pure transparent fountain. From thence they often descend to visit the habitations of mortality, nor do they suffer any inconveniency from the different mediums through which they pass, like flesh and blood who breathe the elastic air. That immense sky, stretched far above our heads, and which appears in azure concave to our view, is seen by angels, far distant on the ethereal plains, as a crystal refuse sphere around the earth ; but when beheld much nearer, it seems a flood calm and serene—a sea without a shore, at whose transparent bottom this globe appears, sometimes obscured by wandering spots ; such are the clouds to angels in the sky. Now on the vast circumference of that sphere Gabriel arrives and views afar off Raphael descending from the worlds above with a mighty host of cherubims and powers celestial. In a short time they alight around him upon the azure plain, where, after mutual salutations of undissembling friendship, Gabriel thus began :—“O thou exalted Prince ! thou leader of angelic hosts ! may I inquire from whence and who are these, or what their business to this lower world ? Strangers they seem to me ; in regions far remote they needs must dwell ; in all my journeys from the throne of God to this inferior world, I do not remember to have seen their faces. Matters of great import, no doubt, have brought them here. If it be lawful for me to inquire or for you to relate the occasion of their journey, I shall attend with pleasure.”

To this Raphael answered in the following words :—“Their business here is no secret ; a matter of universal concern to the intelligent creation has brought them down to this world from their native habitation. Ten hundred times and more has yon dark earth seen the revolutions of day and night since the Almighty Father, from His splendid throne, pronounced these words, which, doubtless, you also heard—“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Ye saints, and all ye blessed angels within the vast circumference of My dominions, assemble now in yon far distant world near where Uriel holds his radiant throne ; there rolls the earth, encompassed by the wandering moon, whose paler beams and varying face divide the seasons and measure out the time to mortal men ; on yonder earth dwells

My beloved Son, My only Son, in whom My glory is expressed. Though He appears to the inhabitants of that world a man in all respects like themselves, yet I behold His glory beaming through the flesh ; on Him My love, My chiefest love, shall rest when suns and stars shall perish and decay. In Him My wisdom, power, and goodness shall for ever dwell, and through Him shall be displayed in everlasting bounty to blessed angels and righteous men. There shall ye behold what never yet was seen through the vast extent of creation, a world redeemed by His precious blood, and rebellious angels conquered by His death. Go, then, and view His sufferings ; behold His glorious deeds ; learn from His life how men and angels ought to live.' Thus spoke the Eternal from His splendid throne. His voice was heard with a joyful obedience, and immediately they assemble in flaming squadrons from ten thousand worlds. Since that time they frequently descend to behold His wondrous actions, and ascend again by turns : and now on this pure convexity they travel far to the east along with the rising sun ; they view the earth, behold its various climates ; they bewail the nations sunk in ignorance of the true God, and mark those lands where the fallen angels hold their impious thrones. All this, perhaps, ye know ; but as for these bright legions whom you now behold, they are indeed strangers, the inhabitants of far distant worlds, but lately sprung from chaos and eternal night. Their dwelling-place is on the utmost verge of nature, fast by the dark, the deep, the infinite abyss of boundless space, where God alone resides. Three years and more have they travelled on their way, swifter than the beams from yon refulgent star, and having passed unnumbered worlds and glorious systems, suns, and revolving planets, stretched out in empty space, far, far beyond the reach of mortal eyes or human thought, they now await the rising day and the arrival of other angelic powers, when all the sons of light shall behold with amazement the sufferings and death of the great Messiah."—*The Messiah*, Book v. pp. 182–187.

#### ORTHODOXY.

*Theophilus*. What do you mean by the word orthodoxy ?

*Philander*. I mean right opinions concerning religion.

*Theo*. Does not every man and every Church believe their own religious opinions to be right ?

*Phil*. No doubt they do.

*Theo*. Consequently all men believe their own opinions to be orthodox.

*Phil*. True, but what then ?

*Theo*. You see that orthodoxy is a word of various and contrary significations ; in Rome, it signifies Popery ; in Geneva, it signifies Calvinism ; in Sweden, it signifies the doctrines of Luther ;

but it is impossible they can all be right. What, then, does Mr. M'—— mean by a test of orthodoxy?

*Phil.* He means something that bears witness or gives sufficient evidence that a man's religious opinions are right; namely, his assenting to or subscribing a well-composed creed or summary of Christian doctrines.

*Theo.* It is evident, then, that all the creeds in the Christian world are tests of orthodoxy.

*Phil.* Doubtless they were intended for that purpose.

*Theo.* Then it must follow that all the Churches in the world are orthodox.

*Phil.* No doubt they all believe themselves to be orthodox, though it is impossible they can be all so.

*Theo.* You see, then, that an assent or subscription to any creed is only a proof or a testimony that the man is of the same opinion with those who composed it, but it is no evidence, proof, or testimony that the doctrines contained in that creed are right or true. Thus, when any one tells you that such a man is orthodox, he means no more than that he is of the same opinion with himself. But if orthodoxy is used so as to signify religious opinions true and right in themselves and perfectly agreeable to Scripture, then nothing but the approbation of an infallible judge can be a sufficient test of a man's orthodoxy. And as there is no such judge upon earth, it is impossible that any creed composed by fallible men can be a test of true orthodoxy; and, therefore, though every man ought to search the Scriptures impartially, in order to understand their true meaning, yet no man can be absolutely certain that he is right in all his opinions; yea, it is highly probable that every man is mistaken in some things. And therefore it is evident, that Mr. M'—— means no more by orthodoxy than a belief of those doctrines which he calls the essential and most important doctrines of Christianity; and as he says that everything which a man believes to be essential is really so to him, so it will follow that everything which a man believes to be orthodoxy must be orthodoxy to him. Thus orthodoxy and essential doctrines signify any opinions, true or false, to which any man thinks proper to give these honourable epithets.—*Theophilus and Philander.*

## CHAPTER LXX.

JOHN BANKHEAD, M.A. (1763-1833),

MINISTER AT BALLYCARRY, IN COUNTY ANTRIM.

1. *Faith the Spring of Holiness*. Funeral Sermon for Archibald Edmonstone, late of Redhall, Esq., on Habak. ii. 4, preached at Broadisland, December 27, 1768. pp. 27. [*Belfast*], 1769.
2. *A Catechism* wherein the Questions in the Shorter Catechism composed by the Westminster Divines, are answered in Scripture words. pp. 33, 12mo. *Belfast*, 1786. [2d ed. pp. 27, *Belfast*, 1825.] A. C. B.

JOHN BANKHEAD, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Ballymena, was ordained as minister of Ballycarry, or Broadisland, on the 16th August, 1763. He was promised for his support £45 a year, and the minister's farm. Prior to his ordination he signed the following formula—a formula reducing subscription to the Westminster Confession as near as possible to a nullity, and showing how far the tone of the ministry had degenerated during the previous fifty years:—

“I believe the Westminster Confession to contain a system of the Christian doctrines, which doctrines I subscribe as the confession of my faith.—JOHN BANKHEAD.”

Though the salary of the minister of Ballycarry was not large, yet in 1774 he refused a call to Comber, in County Down, notwithstanding that it was supported by a promise of £74 a year—a very considerable addition to his pastoral income. But two things seem to have decided him to reject the call to Comber—the profit of the manse farm at Ballycarry and the



friendship of the Edmonstones of Redhall, one of the old families warmly attached to the Presbyterian Church.\* Their kindness to Mr. Bankhead was very great. By a codicil to his will dated March 17, 1766, Archibald Edmonstone, Esq., left him all his religious and history books, excepting those which had Mrs. Edmonstone's name in writing on them. Mrs. Edmonstone herself bequeathed him twenty pounds in her will, dated 29th January, 1777, besides much greater gifts in her lifetime. So that the ties of gratitude, that bound him to a place and to a family from which he received so much kindness, were not to be wantonly severed.

The only publications of Mr. Bankhead were his *Funeral Sermon* for Edmonstone and his *Catechism*, the design of which is to answer the questions of the Shorter Catechism in the very words of Scripture. The first edition, published in 1786, follows strictly the questions of the Assembly's Catechism; but the second edition, published in 1825, omits some questions entirely, and alters the terms in which others are put. The extract is designed to give a sample of the difference between the two editions.

In the year 1800 Mr. Bankhead was appointed Moderator of the Synod. The text of his Synodical discourse in the following year was 1 Peter i. 2, but the discourse itself was not published.

Mr. Bankhead was not a literary man. His attention was divided between his congregation and the minister's farm, which, being well adapted alike for pasturage and tillage, proved very profitable to him. All accounts speak of his natural talents, his ready wit, his liberal sentiments, and his worldly wisdom. A writer in the *Christian Unitarian* for 1862† speaks of him as "a man of singular ability, liberal in his theological opinions, and a wonderful judge of human aptitudes and character." He was a person of great imitative powers, and when a number of kindred spirits were near he could keep them in a state of rapturous merriment by occa-

\* Reid, ch. xii. Note 27.

† Vol. i. p. 84.



sional exhibitions of his skill. Dr. Joseph Little, the minister of Killeleagh, was a man of peculiar habits. On one occasion, in a company of ministers, Mr. Bankhead, without giving any notice of what he was about to do, all at once assumed the air, tone, look, and manners of Dr. Little, and exhibited them to such perfection, that the Doctor, no longer able to contain himself, rose and struck his fist upon the table, to the great amusement of the company, and exclaimed, "Joe Little to a tee!"

In a satirical poem of 1817, designated *The Ulster Synod*, and ascribed to the Rev. William Heron of Ballyclare, Mr. Bankhead is thus described:—

"What jocund pastor wends his merry way  
Where Lagan's friendly currents gently stray?  
'Tis thy old friend, J. B—k—d, trots along,  
Himself a host, though for himself least strong,  
Scattering bright wit, sound sense, and Dublin snuff,  
In jovial mixture, and in dose enough  
To make you sneeze, or learn, or loudly laugh;  
Nor think it strange that this self-same B—k—d  
Has fifty golden talents, though his change be fled!"

The last line contains an allusion to the fact that the country pastor was so frugal and industrious, that he accumulated a considerable fortune, rearing a large family, and leaving at his death a competence to each. He was twice married, and was the father of twenty-two children, nineteen of whom arrived at maturity. He died on the 5th of July, 1833, having been minister of Ballycarry for seventy years all but six weeks. For the last twenty years, however, he had retired from the active duties of the pastorate.

He was buried in the churchyard of Templecorran, where the following inscription is found upon his tomb:—

"Rev. John Bankhead, a faithful and enlightened Minister of the Gospel, died 5th of July, 1833, in the 97th year of his age, and 72nd of his Ministry in Broadisland. In memory of his affection, this stone was placed here by his wife Mary."

It will be noticed that there is a mistake in this

inscription, as his ministry extended only to seventy years. His wife was alive so late as 1863. He was father of the physician, Dr. Bankhead, in whose arms the celebrated Lord Londonderry died.\*

#### DECREES OF GOD IN CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

##### 7. *What are the decrees of God?*

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever. He doth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.

[Omitted.]

##### 8. *How doth God execute His decrees?*

Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created. The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all.

[Omitted.]

##### 9. *What is the work of creation?*

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. The worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. And God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good.

##### 7. *What is the work of creation?*

The worlds were framed by the Word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. And God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good.

##### 10. *How did God create man?*

The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man be-

##### 8. *How did God create man?*

God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God

\* I am indebted for nearly everything in this notice to a sketch of the history of Ballycarry Congregation, published in the *Christian Unitarian* for 1863. See in particular Vol. ii., p. 153.

came a living soul. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

11. *What are God's works of providence?*

The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, upholding all things by the word of His power. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

12. *What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?*

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

13. *Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?*

God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions. — *Bankhead's Catechism*, ed. of 1786, pp. 6-8.

9. *What are God's works of providence?*

The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, upholding all things by the Word of His power.

10. *What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?*

The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

11. *Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?*

God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions. — *Bankhead's Catechism*, ed. of 1825, pp. 4-5.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

JAMES BRYSON, M.A. (1764—1796),

MINISTER AT LISBURN AND BELFAST.

1. *The Objections of Infidels* no sufficient Reason for rejecting the Christian Religion. A Discourse delivered before a Meeting of Dissenting Ministers at Belfast, on Tuesday, November 7, 1769. Matt. xxviii. 17. pp. 55. *Belfast*, 1769. A. C. B.
2. *The Obtaining the Divine Approbation*, by dividing the Word of Truth aright, the Supreme Object of a Christian Minister. A Sermon at the Ordination of the Rev. James Caldwell, in Dundonald, September 1, 1772. [2 Tim. ii. 15.] 2d ed. pp. 36. *Belfast*, 1773. A. C. B.
3. *Sermons* on several Important Subjects. 8vo, pp. 478. *Belfast*, 1778. T. W.
4. *The Duties of Masonry* briefly stated. A Sermon delivered before the Orange Lodge of Belfast, No. 257, 24th June, 1782. 2 Kings xxiii. 17. 8vo, pp. 27. *Belfast*, 1782. A. C. B.

MR. JAMES BRYSON, previously a licentiate in connection with the Presbytery of Armagh, was ordained as minister of Lisburn on the 7th of June, 1764. The following is the formula of subscription to the Westminster Confession which he signed before the Presbytery of Bangor prior to ordination:—

“I believe the Westminster Confession, as to all the important articles of religion, to be founded on and agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith. JAMES BRYSON.”

What articles of the Confession Mr. Bryson thought important, no man could, of course, discover from the formula which he subscribed; and a Roman Catholic or a Socinian, as well as a Calvinist, might have con-

scientiously signed it in similar terms. When a Presbytery could receive a subscription in such terms, there was no use whatever in keeping up the form, as Dr. Stephenson most clearly showed ten years afterwards.

Though he took care not to pledge himself too deeply at his ordination, Mr. Bryson was not a sceptic, as was shown by his first published sermon, which appeared in 1769. It is an able though a dry discourse on the Christian Evidences, in which he deals with some of the objections advanced by infidels against our holy religion. It was preached before the sub-Synod of Belfast, which at that time included the Presbyteries of Bangor, Killileagh, and Templepatrick.

Three years afterwards he followed this up with a sermon preached at the ordination of the Rev. James Caldwell, in Dundonald, September 1, 1772, and which contains very much excellent advice, well suited to the circumstances in which it was delivered.

In 1773 Mr. Bryson removed from Lisburn, and accepted a call to become the minister of the Second Congregation of Belfast. Before accepting, however, he made it a condition, as his predecessor did, that he should not be obliged to cease his connection with the Synod of Ulster. To this the congregation assented, and the result was that during his ministry also the Second Congregation of Belfast continued in connection with the General Synod.

While officiating as a minister in Belfast, he published a bulky volume of sermons, intended, as he states in the preface, to deal with four important subjects: the principles on which religion is founded, the motives by which it operates, the end to be accomplished by it, and the means of accomplishing that end. The volume is dedicated to the Rev. William Bryson, of Antrim, by "his friend and kinsman the author," and was printed in 1778. The discourses which it contains, thirteen in all, are sensible and well written, and prove that Mr. Bryson was an able preacher, and in some respects a very superior man. The year of its publication was the year of his Moderatorship. His synodical Sermon,

in 1779, was founded on John v. 39, but was not given to the press.

The only other publication known as his, is a *Sermon on Masonry*, delivered before the Orange Lodge of Belfast in 1782. As the society now known as the Orange Society was not founded till 1795, we conclude that the Orange Lodge before which this sermon was preached was a specific name of one of the Mason Lodges. As will be seen from our extract, Mr. Bryson took the opportunity to give the brethren some very good advice.

It is understood that Mr. Bryson in his last days fell into habits not consistent with his position as a minister, and which led to dissatisfaction in his congregation. This dissatisfaction took visible shape in 1792, when he and his friends retired from the Second Church, and built for themselves a new church in Donegal Street, then and long afterwards known as the Fourth Congregation.

In addition to the published works of Mr. Bryson, twelve manuscript volumes of his sermons are deposited in the Library of the Queen's College, Belfast.

Mr. Bryson did not long survive the removal, as he died in 1796. His son, Dr. Bryson, was a well-known physician in Belfast.\*

#### BROTHERLY LOVE.

Behold this temple of universal nature which God hath raised to Himself. The wisdom displayed in its fabric far surpasses human comprehension, and its strength exceeds the strength of rooted mountains. But what is the grace, what is the beauty, that adorns the stately pile? It is the rich display of universal and impartial love which shines forth in all things, which spreads its rays through universal nature, and which sheds blessedness and honour on every virtuous living being. For God is love, essential and eternal and unchanging love! Love is His name and nature. He loves with an affection worthy of the Godhead, with the affection of a universal Father, with infinite unbounded goodness. His love embraceth all things according to their respective characters and stations, and according to His own eternal laws of

\* MS. *Minutes* of Presbytery of Bangor: *Bible Christian*, vol. i. pp. 169 and 173.



purity and justice. Let us then love like brethren of His most glorious family ; for we are all the sons of God.

We have laid a foundation of confidence, and confidence is the surest foundation on which the superstructure of mutual love can stand. We cannot therefore pretend to be temples of the living God in this world, or hope to be pillars of His eternal temple in the world to come, if our hearts remain destitute of this heavenly grace and ornament. Love is a beauty which God hath diffused over all His works, and expressed in all the establishments of nature. If we would therefore be "followers," *imitators*, "of Him as dear children," the same Divine quality must adorn our tempers, animate our actions, and give a grace and beauty to our lives. In imitation of the unbounded grace of God, in imitation of the transcendent goodness of His holy Son, while we cherish pure affection where we have a ground of trust, let us extend our benevolence to the utmost limit of human feeling, and our kind offices through the amplest range in which God hath enabled us to act. All the children of God are our brethren ; they should all therefore meet us in a brother's love. This is the spirit of Masonry. This is the doctrine of the Gospel. This is the voice of nature and of God. This, therefore, is the richest ornament of angel and of man. For in every rank of being charity is the bond of perfectness, the life and ornament of worth.—*The Duties of Masonry*, pp. 19-21.

#### DESIGN OF MASONRY.

I do assert, and all the well-informed brethren who hear me know, that Masonry was instituted for the express purpose of uniting men to God and to one another. This high design it pursued through all the ages of the most remote antiquity, and this end it hath less or more served in every civilised nation of the world, that history hath recorded or travellers have brought to our knowledge. The Scriptures manifest this in places without number ; and as to other writings, the learned and initiated can be at no loss to judge of this assertion. I say the *learned* ; for though there are many things that we all *must* know, and more that we all *might* know, in our several capacities, were we truly studious and attentive to the spirit of the Craft ; yet there are other things which no man can fully understand without an enlarged retrospect into the depths of the most remote antiquity. Let us not, therefore, be contented with the shadow. Let us endeavour to gain the substance, which is indeed of Christ, who is of God.—*The Duties of Masonry*, p. 24.

## CHAPTER LXXII.

BENJAMIN M'DOWELL, D.D. (1766—1824),

MINISTER AT BALLYKELLY AND DUBLIN.

1. *The Requiring Subscription* to well-composed Summaries of the Christian Doctrines as Tests of Orthodoxy defended; in answer to a Pamphlet entitled *The Catholic Christian*, &c., in a Letter to the Rev. John Cameron, the supposed Author of that Pamphlet. 12mo, pp. 85. *Glasgow*, 1770. T. W.
2. *A Second Letter* to the Rev. J——n C——n, in answer to his Defence of *The Catholic Christian*. 12mo, pp. 161. *Belfast*, 1771. T. W.
3. *Observations* on Theophilus Philander, addressed to the Public. pp. 35. 1772. T. W.
4. *A Vindication* of the Westminster Confession of Faith from the Attacks of two late Writers, addressed to Presbyterians in general, in which most of the principal doctrines are explained and defended. 12mo, pp. 72. *Belfast*, 1774. T. W.
5. *Letters of Importance*, wherein are contained some serious queries upon several very interesting points, most humbly and respectfully directed to the ensuing Venerable Synod of Ulster, craving that they may be read and seriously considered at their next meeting, 1775. With an Appendix, containing a short and serious Address to the Protestant Dissenters in the North of Ireland under the pastoral inspection of the foresaid respectable Synod. By Pistophilos Philecclesia [supposed to be M'Dowell]. 12mo, pp. 52. *Belfast*, 1775. M. C. D.
6. *The Doctrine of Salvation by Grace* proved; objections against it answered; and its natural tendency to promote the cause of universal righteousness pointed out. In two sermons from Eph. ii. 8, 9. pp. 48. *Belfast*, 1777. A. C. B.
7. *Sermon* preached at Mary's Abbey on 16th March, 1783, and published at the request of the first Regiment of the Irish Brigade. 1783.
8. *The Standing Orders of Christ* to the Messengers of His grace of every Church and in every age, considered and applied to the

- present time. A Sermon at Mary's Abbey, 21st of July, 1799. Isa. lxiii. 10. pp. 40. *Dublin*, 1799.
9. *A Letter to the Ministers of the Synod of Ulster.* By Amicus. pp. 15. 1807.
10. *The Nature of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government* explained, and its comparative advantages pointed out. pp. 70. *Dublin*, 1808. A. C. B.
11. *The Presbyterian Mode of Ordaining to the Holy Ministry*, exemplified in the Ordination of the Rev. John Baird to the Congregation of Stratford-on-Slaney, on September 24, 1811, by the Presbytery of Dublin. [In this Pamphlet the sermon is by M'Ewen, the prayer by Horner, and the rest by M'Dowell.] pp. 53. *Dublin*, 1812.

THIS eminent minister was born at Elizabethtown, in New Jersey, on the 25th of December, 1739. His father, Ephraim M'Dowell, was an immigrant from Ireland, who had settled at Lamington, in New Jersey. He learned Latin from a Mr. Hanna of Hunterdon County, in the same State, and his college education was obtained first at Princeton, and afterwards at the University of Glasgow. His parents had been among the adherents of the Reformed Presbytery—the most rigid class of the Presbyterians;\* but their son joined the Church of Scotland, and was in due course licensed by the Presbytery of Glasgow, on the 3d of July, 1766. Having come to Ireland to visit his relations, who are said to have resided at Connor, in the County Antrim, he began to exercise his gifts, and immediately afterwards received a call from the congregation of Ballykelly, then vacant by the demission of the Rev. John Nelson. He was ordained in that congregation on the 3d of September, 1766.† A great work lay before him in reuniting and instructing a congregation which had been so much distracted by the ministry of his predecessor, but for any work that could be accomplished by prudence, orthodoxy, and piety, few men were better qualified than Benjamin M'Dowell.

The publication of *The Catholic Christian* in 1769

\* *Second Letter* to Cameron, p. 106.

† *Minutes* of the sub-Synod of Derry. The 2d of September is the date given in the Minutes of the General Synod.

was the first thing that induced Mr. M'Dowell to address the public through the press. He wrote and published a letter to the supposed author of that work, the Rev. John Cameron of Dunluce (see ch. lxx.), in which he maintains that creeds, especially intended for the instruction and guidance of the people, ought to be plain, concise, and confined to the essential and most important principles of Christianity, and undertakes to show that "creeds thus composed are reasonable, useful, necessary, and of *Divine original*." In the latter part of this proposition, namely, to show that uninspired creeds are apostolic in their origin, the writer, in my opinion, entirely fails; but he maintains successfully his main position, and replies to various sentiments of *The Catholic Christian* in a satisfactory manner. This reply appeared in 1770.

The following year, Cameron came out with the *Catholic Christian Defended*. M'Dowell responded in a *Second Letter*, dated from Ballykelly, April 2, 1771. It is a complete reply, following his anonymous opponent (for the pastor of Dunluce, though well known to be the writer, had not given his name) paragraph by paragraph, and meeting his objections *seriatim*. He points out how the "Catholic Christian" had changed his ground; for he had set out by objecting to any creed in any form, but now he professes himself willing to accept a creed containing nothing but essentials, so soon as such a creed is presented to him. M'Dowell points out that this is a surrender of his original position, and that his opponent no longer opposes a human uninspired creed, provided that such a creed is limited to essentials; he maintains also that the Nicene Creed fulfils the required conditions, and asserts that the Westminster Confession, in addition to essentials, contains other things useful and important. As is common in such cases, the argument on both sides becomes more personal as it proceeds, and shows a tendency to run off from the main subject into a dispute about words.

The *Dialogue between Theophilus and Philander* was Cameron's response. This was followed by M'Dowell's

*Observations* in 1772. In this pamphlet the author, having failed to induce Cameron to lay aside his mask, turns aside from him and appeals directly to the public. This work is specially remarkable for the direct charge of Arianism, which it brings against the minister of Dunluce. In page 22 he states openly that he suspects him of it, and quotes in proof an extract from the epic published by Cameron in 1768—*The Messiah*—in which Joseph, a friend of Jesus, apologises for the statement "Before Abraham was, I am," by supposing that Christ was an angel who had come from heaven, and had lived in the body thirty years, and might justly use this language. Commenting on this apology, M'Dowell says, "To me it is evident, that he who wrote it did not believe in the self-existence of the Son of God."

This ended the controversy between Dunluce and Ballykelly. The effect of it was salutary and encouraging. For years before it occurred, New Light divinity seemed to pass almost unquestioned in the Synod, or, if any expressed orthodox opinions, it was in feeble, hesitating tones, which did not carry with them the ring of confidence and conviction. For twenty years before, it was to the sermons of the Seceding ministers that Ulster had to look almost exclusively for full distinct declarations of the Gospel. But these publications made it clear that, whatever appearance might be, orthodoxy and spiritual life were not yet extinct in the Synod of Ulster. From Ballykelly now there was lifted up a strong, clear, powerful voice on behalf of the old faith.

So keenly did the New Light party feel the effects of the rencontre between Cameron and M'Dowell, that Dr. Colville of Dromore (see ch. lxii.), now far advanced in years, came to the rescue of his friend, and in his *Queries* made a new attack on the Westminster Confession as an uninspired creed; and, moreover, took exception to its teaching on the subject of predestination and the civil magistrate. The pointed terms in which the author referred to M'Dowell, made a reply almost imperative. Besides, some short time before,



there had appeared, without the author's name, a small pamphlet entitled *The First Article of the Westminster Confession of Faith Examined*, which impugned the teaching of that formulary in regard to the salvation of the heathen. In 1774, Mr. M'Dowell replied to both publications in his *Vindication of the Westminster Confession*. In this work he maintains that the heathen cannot be saved by the law of nature, but that the elect portion of them may be saved through Christ independent of the ordinary means. He vindicates the teaching of the Confession, in regard to predestination and the civil magistrate, in the most convincing and satisfactory manner. It is written in a clearer and better style than any of his preceding works, and disposes so effectually of some popular objections to the Confession, which are constantly turning up, that the marvel is that it has never been reprinted. It might do good service again. But whether or not, it was of use when it appeared. The manifestation of ready controversial skill and power was so distinct in this publication, that neither Dr. Colville, nor any other in his behalf, ventured to reappear in the field.

The following year Mr. M'Dowell followed up the preceding writings by his *Letters of Importance* addressed to the Synod of Ulster, and issued under the fictitious signature *Pistophilos Philecclesia*. It is an earnest appeal to ministers and people to hold fast by the doctrines of the Westminster Confession. The recent case of Dr. Stephenson at Greyabbey (see ch. lxxvii.) made it manifest that some were desirous to reduce subscription to a nullity, and others to abolish it altogether. Indeed the author, at the time he wrote (1775), does not hesitate to say that those ministers in favour of adhering to the Confession were the minority of the Synod. The object of his third letter is to stir up this small party to remonstrate with their brethren for despising the Confession, and in case they proved irreclaimable, to suggest consideration of the propriety of withdrawing from their communion.

In 1777, Mr. M'Dowell gave proof that all his thoughts



did not run in the line of controversy, by the publication of a pamphlet without any polemical aspect, embodying the substance of two sermons on the doctrine of *Salvation by Grace*. This is an excellent treatise on the subject, clear, convincing, powerful. The plan he adopts is first to explain the meaning of the doctrine, then to prove from the Word of God and from reason that it is thus only that we are saved, and then to answer the popular objections to the dogma. This was his last publication as minister of Ballykelly.

The talents and orthodoxy of Mr. McDowell were now so well known to the whole Church, that few could doubt his qualifications for filling a more prominent post. In 1778 he accepted an invitation to become minister of the congregation of Capel Street, Dublin, which had lately assumed the name of Mary's Abbey. Dr. Baird, the preceding minister (see ch. xc.), had almost annihilated the congregation, and when Mr. McDowell arrived in the metropolis, he found that the people over whom he was appointed consisted of six families and a few individuals. For many years after, with the exception of a Volunteer sermon in 1783, he seems to have given nothing to the press, but to have contented himself with assiduous attention to pastoral duty, with the view of "building again the tabernacle which had fallen down." His labours were not in vain. He built up a respectable and flourishing congregation out of the ruins, and outside his own church he contributed largely to give a high tone of piety and orthodoxy to the metropolis.

The character and services of Mr. McDowell came in due time to be appreciated by his brethren. The Synod of Ulster, which met at Dungannon in 1786, raised him to the Moderator's chair. Next year, when retiring from office, he preached before the Synod at Lurgan on 2 Cor. ii. 17; but the discourse was not published, and we can only conjecture, from what we know of the preacher and of his subject, what the nature of his sermon must have been. The Synod of 1788 marked also its confidence in him, by appointing him for a

time to some such office as the Superintendents filled in the Church of Scotland at the Reformation. It instructed him and the Rev. Robert Rogers (1782-1791), minister of Corboy, to visit the frontier towns of the province of Ulster and the West and the South-West, "where there were any Protestant Dissenters settled, to preach, to inquire into the conduct of ministers and the state of congregations, to observe whether it would be advisable to send preachers, and to inquire into the conduct of such as may at any time be sent by the Synod." He and Mr. Rogers carried out these instructions, and the Synod of 1789 thanked both gentlemen for the fidelity with which they had executed the commission.

Dr. Steele Dickson, in his *Letter on the Revival of Church Music*, published in 1791, speaks of Dr. M'Dowell as lately returned from France, and quotes him as testifying to the excellence of the music which he had heard in the Reformed churches of that country. What took him to France at that time, whether pleasure or business, I have not been able to ascertain.

The writings of Dr. M'Dowell in his later years were more of a practical and expository nature, in a great measure free from the controversial and combative tone of his youth.

His treatise on the *Presbyterian Form of Church Government*, published in 1808, is not a defence, but what it ought to be, an explanation. He points out first what he regards as the leading principles of the system, and then shows the amount of support which the Scripture yields to these principles. Its statement of Presbyterian polity is popular rather than scientific, and while correct in general, it is not minutely accurate, and fails, as I think, to present the system in its strength. He takes the ground that the minister and the ruling elder were radically and officially different orders in the apostolic age: that the elder sits in Church courts to represent the laity, not in virtue of his office as a ruler in the Church of God: and that a graduation of courts is essential to the system.

No doubt many intelligent Presbyterians would agree with Dr. M'Dowell in these opinions. I think them erroneous, and that his argument is weakened by the attempt to establish them. On the other hand, he shows successfully that Presbyterianism in its general outlines is agreeable to Scripture, and that, in a variety of respects, it has the advantage over rival systems.

Dr. M'Dowell lived to a ripe old age, and died on the 13th of September, 1824. His funeral sermon was preached and published by his friend and colleague, Dr. Horner. By all accounts he well deserved the encomium passed upon him by Dr. Killen, as "a sound divine, a graceful and dignified speaker, a man of singular piety, and a most acceptable preacher." \*

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#### CREEDS KEEP OUT ERROR.

So ambiguous is language, especially phrases, some of which were spoken several thousands, and all many hundreds of years since; so differently are the same passages of Scripture understood, that, if persons are left to profess their faith only in the words of Scripture, it will be impossible for a bishop or presbytery to know what are the real sentiments of the persons whom he or they license. They may be Arians, Socinians, Gnostics, and Papists; in a word, the grossest heretics. For all these profess to receive the Scriptures as a Divine revelation and complete rule of faith, except the latter, who add to it the traditions of the Church. Consequently, if they be asked their sentiments concerning any particular point, they may answer, they believe what the Scriptures say concerning it. But can the persons who asked the question receive any satisfaction from this general reply? If a person applying for admission to the Lord's Supper should be asked by the minister to whom he applies in what light he looks upon the bread and wine made use of in that Sacrament, may he not answer, "I view them in the same light in which the Scriptures do"? If asked again, "What is that?" may he not reply, "They are the body and blood of Christ"? But can it be known by this answer whether he considers them only as memorials of the body and blood of Christ, or changed into the quality of the real body and blood of our Saviour? If this same person or a candidate for the ministry be asked what he believes concerning the equality

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod*: M'Dowell's *Works*: Armstrong's *Sketches*: Horner's *Funeral Sermon*: Killen's *History*.

of the Son with the Father, may he not answer, "I believe what the Scriptures declare about it"? If asked again, "What is that?" may he not reply, "He and the Father are one"? But he who from this answer can determine whether he understands these words in the Arian and Socinian sense, viz., that the Father and Christ are one in will and affection, or in the Calvinistic, viz., that they are one in essence as well as will, affection, and design, must certainly have a very uncommon knack of guessing, or rather a power of discerning spirits. . . . I apprehend, without controversy, it may be asserted that, if every one is left at liberty to profess his faith merely in the words of Scripture, it will be absolutely impossible for bishops, ministers, and presbyteries to know the real sentiments of the persons whom they admit to communion or license to serve in God's vineyard. By which means the Church might soon be made to swarm with heretics of every denomination. The most abominable and blasphemous heresy ever invented by man might gain an easy admission, if the author of it could muster up so much assurance as to say he believed the Scriptures. But would this be to use our utmost endeavours to preserve the words and truths of God pure and entire? Would this be to commit the things taught by Christ and His apostles to faithful men, who would be safe guides to others—to men who "in doctrine" would show uncorruptness and sound speech that could not be condemned? I apprehend few will assert it. . . .

It is acknowledged that the expedient which we are now endeavouring to defend has, in some degree, proved ineffectual; for, in spite of it, heretics and heresies many have entered the Church. But this no precaution could prevent. No barrier is sufficient against those who have no proper awe of God or regard to conscience. Such will not stop at anything. And such certainly they must be, who can deliberately subscribe articles which they do not believe. But this is not an argument sufficient to prove that creeds, used as tests of orthodoxy, are not a proper precaution to prevent this evil. . . . The utmost it can prove is, that no precaution can stand against those who pay no regard to promises and oaths; and that there are many such even amongst those who take upon them to be the instructors and guides of others in religion; and, which is still more strange, among those who make the greatest pretensions to sincerity and candour.—*Requiring Subscription to Well-composed Summaries.*

### THE NEW LIGHT.

I acknowledge, sir, that the epithet *New Light* is sarcastical. If it was not, it would be too honourable for the scheme to which it is applied. For, strictly speaking, it should rather be called *Old Darkness*, being a complication of old heresies revived, and reduced to one system. It is true the epithet is just, in the sense in which

it is given. For it is a light or kind of knowledge that is *new*, compared with that knowledge or system of Divine truths which is revealed by the Spirit of God in the Sacred Scriptures, being altogether unknown there. But in what does this reproached system consist? "Only," say you, "in acknowledging no Lord over the conscience but Jesus Christ, and no standard of faith but the Holy Scriptures."

But, sir, you should blush to assert this, in the face of conscience and the world. 'Tis true, indeed, these are some of the pretty words, some of the fair speeches, by which its fatal doctrines are varnished and unwary souls deceived. But I will venture to assert that New Light, as it is now found in the kingdom, more properly consists in acknowledging no Trinity of persons in the Divine essence: no imputation of the guilt of Adam's transgression to his posterity for condemnation: no natural depravity, no innate propensity of the human heart to evil: no vicarious atonement: no imputation of the righteousness of Christ, consisting both of what He did and suffered, to His spiritual seed for justification: no regeneration or new birth, when by that is meant a renewal of every power and affection of the soul and appetite and passion of the body, by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost. And this system is not merely negative. It not only refuses to acknowledge these doctrines, but maintains their opposites, viz., that the Son and Holy Ghost are inferior to the Father: that we come into the world free of any guilt imputed, or moral corruption inherent: that the mind is equally indifferent to good or evil: that the life and death of Christ were only to exhibit a pattern of all amiable and heroic virtues, and to give us a beneficial attestation of the truth of the doctrines which He came to reveal: that there is a twofold justification, the one consisting in our being absolved from past sins, the other in our being accepted and declared righteous by God; that though the former may be of grace, upon account of the sufferings of Christ, yet the latter depends upon our own works: consequently, that our acceptance with God depends upon our sincere though imperfect obedience: that the righteousness of Christ serves only to atone for the defect of our performances, and to procure for them acceptance with God: that to cease to be openly vicious and to become externally decent is all the regeneration which the Gospel requires of those who are born in a Christianised land and educated in the principles of Christianity: that to speak of the renewing and sanctifying of the Divine Spirit in any other sense, since the days of inspiration, is enthusiasm. This, sir, I apprehend, is a juster portrait of what is called New Light, as it is now found in this kingdom, than that which you gave of it.

—*Second Letter.*



## REPROBATION.

"The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, *to pass by*, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath *for their sin*, to the praise of His glorious justice."\*

In which we are taught that the decree of reprobation is twofold.

1. God's passing by the non-elected. This respects the situation into which they are brought by their fall in Adam, and means that God, viewing them in this state, passed over them without fixing His love upon them, and determined to leave them to themselves, to follow the inclinations of their own hearts. And then,

2. His ordaining them to dishonour and wrath. But this, in *order of nature*, is posterior to the former. In this, God, with whom there is neither past nor future, but to whose all-comprehending mind everything is present, views them in a different light. In this part of the decree they are considered not only as fallen in Adam, but as actually sinful, and by their own iniquities fitted to destruction. And is this not the very account which Paul gives of the matter? "What if God, willing to show His wrath (vindictive justice) and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?"†

Reprobation, therefore, is no mere arbitrary appointment, without regard had to demerit in the heirs of wrath. For in it they were considered as guilty, and with this foresight for their sin and impenitence, were in the eternal purpose consigned over to everlasting misery.

But has the decree by which they are ordained to wrath any influence upon the will? Is *it* the cause of their unbelief, their sin, or their impenitence? No more than the sentence by which a criminal is adjudged to death had upon his committing the crime for which he is condemned. The amount of the doctrine therefore is no more than this, that the righteous *only* shall be saved; consequently that none of the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God. And if none but such were reprobated, and if the decree by which they are appointed to destruction for their sins has no efficient influence upon their moral character, then where is the injustice in God? where the just ground for such outcries against the doctrine? Is it not the current doctrine of Scripture that "the wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God"?‡

The general proposition, I suppose, the Doctor will readily admit. But that the number of such should be particularly designed or determined, yea, that the individuals should be known in the decree, is the thing he cannot allow. But is not

\* W. C. iii. 7.

† Rom. ix. 22.

‡ Ps. ix. 7.



this a natural consequence of the prescience of God? If God from eternity at one intuitive glance saw all things which to eternity would happen (which must be admitted unless we limit His understanding), then must He not have seen every individual who would abuse His mercies, transgress His laws, and continue impenitent in guilt? And if the decree extends to all such without exception, then must not every such individual, as if known by name, have been included in the damnatory sentence? And, unless the natural connection betwixt impenitence in transgression and misery be dissolved, and God be made the justifier of those who continue unjust, must not every such soul without exception perish?

The reason, therefore, why one of the reprobate cannot be saved, is because not one of them will repent and return to God, and God has decreed, and the holiness of His nature requires it, that no impenitent sinner shall be saved; but that every obstinate transgressor shall perish. But do they perish "for what they never consented to do, nor could possibly prevent," as the Doctor supposeth in the objection? No; but for sins which they have voluntarily committed, and in which they have obstinately persisted; and therefore they perish justly, and their destruction is not from God, but from themselves.

And whether we have not reason to suspect that the greatest part of mankind shall be found amongst this unhappy number, judge from the following words of Him who knows well what is in man, "Many are called, but few are chosen. Enter in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, *and many there be which go in thereat*; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and *few there be that find it.*"\*

But will it hence follow that God made the greatest part of mankind to damn them? So the Doctor seems to think. But this evidently ariseth from an ignorance of the doctrine, from which, as explained above, it cannot be inferred that He made any part of mankind on purpose to damn them. No; all that can be drawn from it is, that He made many whom He foresaw would fall from righteousness, transgress His laws, reject the remedy provided, continue impenitent in their guilt, and thereby incur damnation. Consequently, that He made many whom He foreknew would be damned, but damned justly, for their sins. And can this be denied without either denying His prescience or asserting that He will not render "tribulation, anguish, and wrath upon every soul of man that doeth evil"? (Rom. ii. 8, 9) and continueth impenitent. But is there not a great difference betwixt this and God's making rational creatures on purpose to damn them? The one is the doctrine of Scripture, founded in the holiness, the justice, the foreknowledge, and the truth of God. But the other is a blasphemous supposition, injuriously palmed upon

\* Matt. xx. 16, vii. 13, 14.

this doctrine, badly understood by many who are forward to write against it.

But if it should be said, "'Tis at least harsh to say that God from eternity ordained any rational creature to everlasting wrath," we answer, The expression as well as the doctrine is scriptural. Does not Jude, when speaking of the false teachers which prevailed in his day, use the same phraseology? "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were *before of old ordained to this condemnation.*"\* And is it not the doctrine of Solomon that "the Lord hath made all things for Himself; yea, *even the wicked for the day of evil*"?† But is this saying anything more than this, that God from eternity decreed that every impenitently wicked soul should perish, and that in His infinite foreknowledge He saw who the guilty transgressors would be? And is not this consistent with the most perfect goodness? Is it not necessary in a being of essential holiness? How else should He judge the world? If the sound be harsh, let sinners avoid the doom; let them flee from this wrath. In this the decree will lay no restraint on them.

Or if God upon account of this doctrine should be charged with partiality to His creatures, 'tis obvious to reply that 'tis such a partiality as is altogether free from injustice. In the first of men, by His Word, by His providence, and by His works, He has so showed all men what is good and what He requires of us, as to leave them inexcusable. By the decree He leaves no constraint upon the will, but leaves them to themselves. If any misimprove their several talents, therefore, the fault is their own, not His. While, therefore, He inflicts on them the punishment which they have deserved, He does them no wrong; they suffer justly. And that He saves others, by nature and by practice, as great sinners as they, whilst He condemns them, can be no impeachment upon His justice, unless it can be proved *that He is bound to bestow grace alike upon all.* But can this be done? Can it be attempted without endeavouring to limit the Most High, and to say that He may not dispose of His favours as He pleaseth? May we not, upon this occasion, adopt the words of Paul, "Behold here the goodness and severity of God"—on those who disobey, severity or strict justice, but towards them that believe and are saved, goodness or mercy? Though the latter, therefore, have reason to praise and adore God for the riches of His grace, the former have no just cause to complain, but may acknowledge that they receive only what is their due. 'Tis of God's mercy that any are saved; but He is not unjust, though many be damned. If, like the discontented and disappointed labourer, any should attempt to complain, God may justly reply, "Friend, I do thee no wrong. Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"‡—*Vindication of the W. Confession.*

\* Jude i. 4.

† Psal. xvi. 4.

‡ Matt. xx. 13-15.

## THE USE OF CREEDS.

All the friends of the Church and lovers of the truth had need to be ever on their guard against men of corrupt minds and dangerous principles. For we are told by the Spirit of God that "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake:" that "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears: and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables:" that "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived:" and that "Many deceivers and many false prophets are gone out into the world." Certainly these warnings import that the Church is in great danger from false teachers and men of corrupt principles: that she ought constantly to be on her guard against them, and to take every possible precaution to prevent the evils which might arise from that quarter.

As a means of preventing the evils which the Church might sustain from the unwearied endeavours and restless attempts of cunning deceivers and false teachers to propagate their pernicious schemes and subvert the simple from the truth, the Reformed Churches in every age and place have generally drawn up a summary of the principles and doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures as a test of orthodoxy and term of ministerial communion among them; and in general they have always refused to admit any ministers into, or to keep any in communion with them, save those who openly approved and subscribed said summary of orthodox doctrines. Let the histories of the Reformed Churches of Holland, Geneva, France, England, Scotland, &c., bear witness of this. And for so doing they have the Divine authority and warrant. For they are divinely commanded to "Hold fast the form of sound words," and to "Reject every man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition," and "To withdraw from every brother who walketh disorderly."

Be it so that there is no express text of Scripture which contains this command in so many words, "Ye shall draw up a summary of the principles contained in the Sacred Volume, and make use of the same as a test of orthodoxy and term of ministerial communion." Yet there is a variety of Scripture precepts, from which, compared, native and easy conclusions may be drawn, from which conclusions this proposition may be convincingly illustrated—*That the Church hath a Divine right and warrant to draw up a summary of the doctrines contained in Scripture, and to use the same as a test of orthodoxy and term of ministerial communion.* I shall transcribe the following. [Here he quotes 1 Cor. i. 10; 1 Tim. v. 22; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Tit. i. 7, 9, 10, 11; ii. 1, 7, 8; iii. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 3-5.] Here is a number of express precepts commanding that ministers be faithful men, sound in the faith,

able to teach others, holding fast the faithful words as they have been taught, able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers, and in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, and sincerity, &c. And also it is here enjoined that they be all of one mind in doctrine, that there be no division in principles among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment. It is further in these precepts required that ministers be cautious in admitting men into the holy ministry; that none may be admitted into that sacred office but faithful men, men sound in doctrine, &c. And last of all, that those who teach unsound doctrine, and who will not consent to wholesome words, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, shall, upon their obstinacy, be rejected from the office of the ministry, and kept from ministerial communion. All these precepts are evidently contained in the above-cited Scriptures. And certainly it is not very difficult to perceive that they necessarily imply a test of orthodoxy. There is no way in which obedience could be given to these precepts, but either first by men under the influence of inspiration, who could infallibly judge of men's hearts, and could not be imposed upon by men seeking ministerial communion with them, as it was in the days of the Apostles, in which time tests of orthodoxy were not necessary: or, secondly, by having public and approved tests of orthodoxy, evidently founded on the Scriptures, to which the open consent of all entrants into the ministry is to be given, and which they are to subscribe, and their continuance in ministerial communion is still to be on condition that they abide by that form of doctrine to which they gave their public consent when they were first admitted. As soon as inspiration and the gift of discerning spirits ceased, the Church found that she could not defend herself against the pernicious designs of erroneous men and cunning deceivers, nor give obedience to these precepts of her exalted Head, without this necessary caution to prevent being imposed upon.

Thus it appears from native and easy Scripture consequences that scriptural tests of orthodoxy are useful, necessary, and of Divine authority: *useful*, to try men's soundness in the faith, and their fitness for being admitted to the sacred office of the ministry, and intrusted with the concerns of immortal and precious souls; *necessary*, to defend the Church from heresy, and to preserve her from the unwearied assaults of deceiving impostors: and of *Divine authority*, inasmuch as the usefulness and necessity thereof can be argued and proved from evident and necessary scriptural consequences.—*Letters of Importance*, pp. 35–38.

#### MORAL EFFECTS OF THE NEW LIGHT.

That the doctrine of grace, in the sense I have endeavoured to explain it in the preceding discourse, was generally taught and professed here till about the year 1721, I suppose will not be denied. At that time the opposite doctrines began openly to

appear: since that they have spread, and now, alas! are pretty generally received. But what has been the consequence? Has true religion, has practical godliness, increased in proportion? Are the ordinances of the Gospel better attended? Are the seals of the covenant held in higher esteem? Is the Sabbath accounted more holy, and more religiously observed than formerly? Is the voice of sacred joy and melody heard more generally, evening and morning, in the houses of those who profess the name of Christ? Or, notwithstanding our fuss about morality, are the laws of justice and temperance more strictly observed than before our boasted "theological improvements" took place? Is not the reverse notoriously true? Are not the ordinances undervalued, and the sacred mysteries of our religion comparatively disregarded? Is not the Sabbath, by multitudes, converted into a day of visiting, feasting, or travelling? Is not the name of God egregiously profaned by unhallowed lips? Do not excess, riot, levity, and impurity abound? Does not vice wanton in every form? In these days of "moral" and "theological" refinement, may we not find an accomplishment of the Apostle's mournful prediction, Rom. iii. 10-21? Can it be denied that these things are so? And are they not sad proofs that we have not changed for the better? —*Salvation by Grace*, pp. 44, 45.



## CHAPTER LXXIII.

ANDREW ALEXANDER, A.M. (1749—1808),

MINISTER OF URNEY.

1. *The Nature, Rise, and Pernicious Effects of Religious Enthusiasm.* A Sermon preached to the Dissenting Congregation of Urney, January 7, 1770, and in Londonderry, February 25, 1770. [Acts xxvi. 24, 25.] pp. 36. *Belfast*, 1771.  
T. W.
2. *The Gradual Increase and Progress of Religious Knowledge*, obstructions to it, and means of removing them. Synodical Sermon at Lurgan, June 30, 1772. [Isaiah xi. 9.] pp. 48. *Belfast*, 1772.  
A. C. B.
3. *The Advantages of a General Knowledge of the Use of Arms.* A Sermon preached before the Strabane, Finnwater, and Urney Volunteers, and the Strabane Rangers, in the Meeting of Urney, October 10, 1779. [2 Sam. i. 18.] 4to, pp. 32. *Strabane*, 1779.  
A. C. B.
4. A Sermon preached on the 11th of February, 1787, on the occasion of the death of the Rev. Andrew Ferguson, late Presbyterian Minister of Burt. [Ps. ciii. 15.] 12mo, pp. 30. *Londonderry*, 1787.  
A. C. B.

ANDREW ALEXANDER was ordained minister of Urney, near Strabane, on the 31st of August, 1749.

He was somewhat late in appearing as an author. His sermon on *Religious Enthusiasm* was not published till 1771, when he was over twenty years in the ministry. In it, therefore, we have the fruit of his mature thoughts on the subject under consideration. He describes enthusiasm, as mistaking for the real impulses of the Divinity those strong inward emotions which are produced by zeal for some particular interest. It originates, he thinks, in a weak judgment, a warm imagi-



nation, and in pride; and its effects, according to him, are, that it darkens the understanding, stimulates self-esteem, and begets an indifference to the virtues of the Christian life. The sermon is a dry, cold essay, not devoid of literary merit, but deficient in Gospel truth. Its subject was singularly unseasonable. At no time since the Plantation was Ulster in greater need of a little religious enthusiasm than in the last half of the eighteenth century; and in any case, the preacher, in handling the subject, was dealing with a matter quite beyond the range of his own personal experience.

The year after this sermon was preached, Mr. Alexander was appointed Moderator of the Synod of Ulster, which met at Dungannon in 1771, and, when laying down office in 1772, he preached a Synodical sermon from the words, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord," &c., which was afterwards published. The discourse is written in the clear cold style which suits the philosopher more than the Christian minister. He shows that the prophecy was in part fulfilled already, and would meet in the future with a fulfilment still more complete. He dwells on the obstructions to the progress of religious knowledge, such as prejudice, immorality, unfair representations given of Christianity, and creeds—a subject which no minister, inclined to New Light principles, and required to address his brethren officially, could allow himself to pass, except on rare occasions, without bestowing thereon a buffet as he went. He improves the subject by showing that Christians, and especially Christian ministers, are bound to remove these obstructions, and to promote the advancement of religious knowledge.

It would appear that to Mr. Alexander political enthusiasm did not seem so objectionable as religious, for while he exerted himself to check the latter by pointing out its evil effects, he used every means in his power to elicit and to stimulate the former. In 1779 he preached and published his Volunteer Sermon, from the words, "He bade them teach the children of Israel *the use of the bow.*" The applicability of this text to

the subject is founded, of course, on the words supplied in the English version to complete the sense of the original. There is reason to believe that these words are erroneously supplied.\* The opinion of intelligent interpreters now is, that David was not inculcating instruction in archery, but was commanding the people to be taught *the song of the bow*—that is, the pathetic elegy on the death of Saul and of Jonathan, which received that name in consequence of the manner in which the word *bow* is mentioned therein. If this view is correct, the very text of the discourse is a mistake. The preacher was not aware of this, but uses the words to stir up his military hearers, at what he conceives is a crisis in the history of the nation, to deeds of patriotism and courage.

His last publication was his *Funeral Sermon* for the Rev. Andrew Ferguson (1725–1786), of Burt, grandfather of the first Sir Robert Ferguson. It differs so little from the ordinary staple of discourses preached on such occasions as not to require any particular notice.

Mr. Alexander was an excellent specimen of a Presbyterian Moderate, his religion, so far as we can now judge from his writings, being of a very cold, rational character indeed. He died on the 30th of April, 1808.†

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#### CHARACTER OF FERGUSON OF BURT.

He was immediate successor to his father,‡ who, for a considerable time, discharged the office of Gospel minister in this place with reputation. After reaping the advantages of an early liberal education, he was called, when very young, to engage in the work of the ministry; and at first setting out, his sentiments and discourses were such as might be expected from a youth well versed in scholastic learning, at that time in high repute, and generally studied. His good sense, however, soon enabled him to surmount the prejudices of education; and the taste for natural religion and morals, which then began to prevail, he readily adopted, and, by cultivating it with care, acquired a solid, rational, and

\* Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*, ed. of 1856, vol. iii. p. 308.

† MS. *Minutes of Synod: Alexander's Sermons*.

‡ The Rev. Andrew Ferguson; the father and son filled that office in the congregation of Burt one hundred years.

manly manner of thinking and speaking on these interesting topics. The Divine character, a moral Providence, and the nature of man, were with him favourite studies; and, by an intimate acquaintance with some of the most celebrated writers of antiquity, his taste on these subjects became exquisitely refined. . . .

He was extremely desirous of encouraging an inquisitive temper in others, especially in youth; and so strong was his own bent for improvement, that, in the last stage of life, when he had numbered above eighty years, he discovered the same ardour in reading, conversing, and writing, on curious and important subjects, for which he was distinguished at an earlier period. In this respect, when his "outward man" was decaying, his "inward man was renewed day by day." . . .

To his ministerial labours, a life untainted with the criminal pollutions of the world tended to give a commanding influence. His moral character was, in truth, strongly marked with uncommon purity of manners.

The gentleness and benignity of his temper rendered him, as a parent, a master, a neighbour, and friend, truly amiable, and useful to all his connections. But, in place of confining his humane and benevolent regards within the narrow circle of his family, kindred, or friends, he was kindly disposed to all. As a MAN, he considered himself deeply concerned in whatever affected the most distant of the species. . . .

By Providence he was endowed with an ample fortune, which he enjoyed with moderation, and employed, as a man of sense and a man of virtue, in kind offices to his friends, in a decent hospitality, and acts of charity to the distressed.

Instead of indulging stateliness and pride, which are frequent attendants on affluence, he preserved that command of himself and his lower appetites which is essential to the temperate enjoyment of prosperity.

With a bodily constitution hale and sound, though delicate, he was blessed with a regular flow of good-humour and cheerful spirits—the delight of his friends, and universally caressed by all his acquaintances. Highly respected by people of the first rank, and greatly beloved by the meanest, the evening of his days was tranquil and serene, and the stream of life ran clear and pure to the very last.—*Funeral Sermon*, pp. 21–28.

## CHAPTER LXXIV.

JOHN RANKEN (1751—1789),

MINISTER AT ANTRIM.

The *Exercise and Improvement of the Understanding* recommended, as highly requisite in a Minister of the Gospel. A Sermon preached before a General Synod of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers in Ulster, the second day of their Annual Meeting in Lurgan, July 1, 1772, and published at their desire. 12mo, pp. 29. [1 Cor. xiv. 20.] *Belfast, 1772.*  
A. C. B.

JOHN RANKEN was ordained at Antrim on the 16th of October, 1751, as minister of the new congregation, and successor to the Rev. William Holmes (see ch. liv.).

In 1772 he preached a sermon before the Synod of Ulster on the second day of its meeting in Lurgan, which was subsequently published at its request. The subject was, "In understanding be men." He shows, first, the meaning and extent of this precept, and then dwells on the motives to its observance. It is an excellent discourse, sound in sentiment, polished in diction, and appropriate to the occasion. To be appointed in those days to preach on the *second* day of the Synod's meeting, was usually preliminary to promotion to the highest office in the Church. In 1774 the Synod conferred the Moderatorship on Mr. Ranken. When retiring from office in the following year, he preached from Titus ii. 15, but this sermon was not given to the press. He died in 1789. No other facts in his biography have come to my knowledge. The wonder is, that a man of such cultivation has left behind him so

small a mark in the history of the Church. In all ages, we must remember, there are good, useful, and able men, who serve God in the position that they are appointed to fill, and of whom very little is known. It is not always the best men who make the loudest noise.\*

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#### MINISTERS INCITED TO MENTAL CULTIVATION.

How many men are there whose understandings continue always nearly in a state of childhood, whose minds are uncultivated, unexercised, unimproved, whose time is spent in a supine negligence, or in a criminal inattention to the pleasing acquisition of knowledge and science? Such a conduct is highly blameworthy in every being endowed with powers of perception and reflection, and situated in a world where opportunities of receiving information are so frequent and numerous; but it is more peculiarly reprehensible in those who by their office and station are called upon to enlighten and inform the judgment of the rest of mankind, and who are, therefore, obliged to use every means in their power to cultivate to the highest perfection those capacities of knowledge and discernment which God has bestowed upon them. The ample field of knowledge and truth has, by human industry and application, been divided into a variety of walks, which are called the Sciences. Upon these a particular degree of attention hath been bestowed, and many of them have been greatly improved. With these as much as possible should the Christian pastor be acquainted; and all the information which he can acquire will be no more than necessary to gain such clear and enlarged notions of things as will be useful to his conduct in the various parts of his office. . . .

Above all, it is the duty of a Christian pastor to study, with the utmost care, those more clear notices of Divine truth which are contained in the Bible. There he will find human duty delineated in the most clear and amiable light, and recommended by motives much stronger than those which the light of nature could afford. There he will find the noblest provision made for the expiation of guilt and the pardon of sin; there he will see an immortality of joy revealed with an evidence and assurance far surpassing everything which the world before saw, and capable of inspiring the soul with the most animated ardour of possessing these exalted objects of its hope and love. But as, from the brevity of human life, the limited nature of human capacity, and the very small share of experience which even those placed in the most favourable circumstances can have, the fund of knowledge derived

\* *Minutes of Synod : Ranken's Sermon.*

merely from our own observation must be very scanty, it will be eminently useful, in improving the mind to a manly maturity, to profit by attending to the discoveries and observations of others.

In the numerous literary productions which are extant, a vast variety of useful knowledge may be found, which will greatly assist his inquiries ; and from a sense of this the learned Apostle of the Gentiles exhorts even the inspired Timothy to give attendance to reading. To select, then, the best books in each branch of science, and to study them with care, is his duty. But as knowledge acquired by reading is no further useful than as it is rightly digested and properly improved, he ought, therefore, on every subject that occurs, to exercise vigorously his thinking powers. Knowledge taken in and not digested renders the faculties of reflection weak and torpid, whereas exercise strengthens and enlarges them. This only can raise them to that state of manhood pointed out in my text.

I know it is commonly alleged that the various branches of science have, by writers of superior genius, been so totally exhausted as to leave nothing new to be discovered ; but I am persuaded that such an assertion is altogether groundless. Upon any subject of erudition, the possible knowledge seems really inexhaustible. We have seen what new tracks writers of genius have struck out, even upon the most beaten subjects ; and no man but by experience can know to what exalted heights of knowledge, by a vigorous cultivation of his thinking powers, he himself may possibly arrive.—*Exercise and Improvement of the Understanding*, pp. 8-12.



## CHAPTER LXXV.

SAMUEL BARBER (1763—1811),

MINISTER OF RATHFRILAND.

1. A *Sermon* occasioned by the death of the late Rev. George Richey ; preached at Donoghmore. [Job xxxiv. 15.] pp. 27. *Newry*, 1772. J. E. A.
2. *Volunteer Sermon* on 2 Sam. xiii. 28.
3. *Remarks* on a Pamphlet entitled, *The Present State of the Church of England*, by Richard Lord Bishop of Cloyne. [James v. 4.] pp. 60. *Dublin*, 1787. A. C. B.
4. *Synodical Sermon* at Lurgan, June, 1791.

SAMUEL BARBER was ordained as minister at Rathfriland on the 3d May, 1763. His first published work, the *Funeral Sermon* for Richey, is designed to impress the congregation with a sense of the certainty of death, and to persuade them to repentance and a virtuous life, concluding, as is usual, with a sketch of the character of the deceased.

His wife was a daughter of Rev. Andrew Kennedy of Mourne, and a grand-daughter of Gilbert Kennedy (see ch. xxxi.).

He took an active part in the Volunteer movement. When Lord Glyrawley disarmed the Rathfriland Regiment, as he had power to do, he having supplied them with arms at his own cost, Mr. Barber was chosen by the officers and men as colonel in his Lordship's room. It was to this regiment he preached his Volunteer Sermon, and as their representative he sat in the three great Volunteer Conventions.

When Dr. Woodward, Bishop of Cloyne, published

his pamphlet, in which he attempted (see next chapter) to show that the fidelity of the Episcopalians to the constitution was superior to that of the Presbyterians, Mr. Barber was one of his Presbyterian antagonists. The rejoinder of the minister of Rathfriland was smart, keen, biting, and so full of home-thrusts that his Lordship fell back upon his dignity, and did not find it convenient to respond.

In 1790 Mr. Barber was appointed Moderator of Synod. When retiring from office the following year, he preached a discourse on Rev. xviii. 20, which was subsequently published.

In the great struggle of 1790 to return the Hon. Robert Stewart to the Irish Parliament as M.P. for County Down, in opposition to the house of Hill, Mr. Barber took an active share, and the triumph, after a contest extending over thirteen weeks, was largely owing to his exertions.

Mr. Barber died on the 5th of September, 1811. It is understood that his leanings were to the Unitarian theology. Dr. McKnight, the editor of the *Derry Standard* for so many years, himself a native of Rathfriland, and so very competent to judge, speaks of him as "a man of vigorous intellect, an accomplished classical and Hebrew scholar, at a time when biblical erudition was far less cultivated than at present, while energy of character and high public spirit were conspicuous attributes of his intellectual and moral temperament on all fitting occasions." Dr. Montgomery describes him as "possessing a singularly vigorous mind, a cultivated taste, a ready wit, a fluent elocution, a firm purpose, an unsullied character, and a most courteous demeanour."\*

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#### CHRISTIANITY INDEPENDENT OF AN ESTABLISHMENT.

The Christian system cannot be formed according to the genius of the civil constitution. It is a system simple and uniform: the laws of it are all contained in the New Testament;

\* *Outlines in Irish Unitarian Magazine* for 1847, pp. 286, 291: *Christian Unitarian* for 1866, p. 359.

everything necessary to be believed in order to salvation, to make the man of God perfect, and to fit him for every good work, is there revealed under the immediate inspiration of God. The Almighty did not leave His work imperfect till the age of Constantine, nor can this perfect system ever fall under the review of any body of men, till they produce stronger testimonials of a Divine mission than our Saviour and His Apostles. This, however, can never happen, for the Apostle declares, that if an angel from heaven should teach any other doctrine, let him be accursed. Religion is defined a worship of the Father in spirit and in truth, the love of God and man, charity out of a pure heart, sound conscience, and faith unfeigned. These duties are far above human laws; their practice elevates the soul above forms, shows, and ceremonies. All the objects of human laws sink into contempt, when compared to that peace of mind which the sincere performance of these duties naturally inspires. Can the legislators of different countries mould and fashion the soul to the virtues, and fill it with that love of God which passeth all understanding? No; the whole object of the legislator's province, when he meddles with a kingdom where he has no power, is to decree rites and ceremonies, and to chain down the soul to a certain system of opinions; to provide large revenues for the teachers of the national faith, and to oppress and persecute all who, like Daniel, refuse to worship, kneel, or bow as the law directs; to proscribe all teachers who refuse to wear the legal garb, and who will not declare unfeigned assent and consent to any other book but the Word of God; to exclude from all confidence those who dare to address the Deity agreeable to the feelings of their own wants, and suitable to their own humble desires, or in other words than those prescribed by law.—*Remarks*, pp. 10–12.

#### SUPPOSED RESULT OF DISESTABLISHMENT.

The Legislature can as easily, and with as little danger to the State, change the Ecclesiastical Establishment, as it can alter the mode of collecting the revenue, augment or disband the army or the navy. They are all equally the creatures of the civil power, and under its immediate control. We find England a free and flourishing country before the Reformation. We find the Church which Magna Charta declares to be inviolable overturned, while the State remains unimpaired. And I do verily believe, if the Ecclesiastical Establishment, with its awful train of Archbishops, Lord Bishops, Deans, Archdeacons, Chancellors, Prebendaries, registrars, proctors, tithe-farmers, and even tithes, were annihilated this day, that the sun would rise to-morrow. I believe that the Houses of Parliament would sit, and transact business as usual: that the courts of law would meet to dispense justice, and that the judges would go the circuits to hold the next Lent Assizes. I do not believe the convulsion occasioned by a repeal of the

Act of Uniformity would be quite so bad as the earthquake at Lisbon. Your terrors, my Lord, are all imaginary, as to the State in general. You indeed might be affected. A lordship, thousands a year, rule and power, are fine things, well worth defending and sounding an alarm through the land for, when you are afraid of losing them; but the great body of the people would be little affected, except to be gainers, and you may be assured, if they would not warmly approve, they would not violently oppose the measure.—*Remarks*, pp. 22-24.

#### PRELATIC DISTRUST OF THE PRESBYTERIANS.

The Presbyterians have been settled in Ulster since the year 1611, near two centuries. In all that time they have behaved quietly and peaceably, and borne their full share in the Revolution, and the settlement of the august house of Brunswick on the throne. They have been as loyal subjects as any prince ever ruled over, even under the discouragement of penal laws, tithes, Bishops' courts, and disqualifications to hold offices. And shall any man at this day proclaim to the world that they are *not entitled to national confidence*? The assertion must recoil upon the author.

Your Lordship says, that though Dissenters may acquiesce for a time in Establishments which they dislike, from love of quiet, yet whenever a safe opportunity shall offer to give free scope, their principles will operate. The weight of the National Church, therefore, ought to be preserved in the balance of the State, which balance must be effectually destroyed by whatever weakens the Ecclesiastical Establishment, as well as by a positive addition of strength to either of the Dissenting communions. You judge right of the Protestant Dissenters. They are not in love with their chains. They feel them. They don't like to give more than the tenth of their labour for nothing, and to men who declare them unworthy of national confidence. Your Lordship's pamphlet shows the opinion the High Church entertains of them, and will not reconcile them to the payment of tithes to their avowed enemies.

Your Lordship seems mightily afraid of any addition of strength to the Dissenting communions. Do you think Ireland created for the Establishment only? Do you wish them to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for you, *in secula seculorum*? Must seven-eighths of the nation for ever crouch to the eighth? Revelation informs us God hath made of one blood all nations. The language of a bigoted, contracted soul is, "Stand aside, I am holier than thou; by this craft we have our wealth; great is Diana of the Ephesians."—*Remarks*, pp. 28-30.

#### TREATMENT OF PRESBYTERIANS IN ULSTER.

A century hence, when some of our posterity shall read your celebrated pamphlet, and learn from it that tithes were at this

time paid by the whole people of Ireland to the teachers of the eighth part, they will immediately conclude that Presbyterians were a conquered people, or they never would have submitted to such a disgraceful situation as to be the Helots of the Episcopalians. Worse than Helots ; for the Lacedemonians never increased their servitude, whereas that of the Presbyterians keeps pace with their industry. Your readers, at that time, must also conclude that the Presbyterians took every advantage of their oppressors. How will they be surprised to find, on consulting history, that they fought at their side and conquered with them : that they planted, civilised, and improved the province of Ulster, and while they were doing so, forged their own chains, which in time became so firmly rivetted, that to get rid of them they were obliged in great numbers to abandon that very country they had made a comfortable habitation ! Was ever *vos non vobis* more applicable ? They assisted in conquering the Roman Catholics, and were reduced to the same servitude.—*Remarks*, pp. 36, 37.

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL, D.D. (1759—1805),

MINISTER AT ANTRIM, ARMAGH, AND CLONMEL.

1. *The Presence of Christ with His Church*, in every Age and Period of it, explained and improved. Synodical Sermon at Antrim, June 28, 1774. [Matt. xxviii. 20.] pp. 48. *Belfast*, 1774. A. C. B.
2. *A Vindication of the Principles and Character of the Presbyterians in Ireland*; addressed to the Bishop of Cloyne, in answer to his book entitled *The Present State of the Church in Ireland*. *Dublin*, 1787. [This work ran through four editions.] 3d ed. pp. 74. *London*, 1787. M. C. D.
3. *An Examination of the Bishop of Cloyne's Defence of his Principles*; with Observations on some of his Lordship's Apologists, particularly the Rev. Dr. Stock. Containing an Inquiry into the Constitution and Effects of our Ecclesiastical Establishment: and an Historical Review of the Political Principles and Conduct of Presbyterians and Episcopalians in Great Britain and Ireland, with a Defence of the Church of Scotland from the charge of Persecution brought by his Lordship's Apologist. 12mo, pp. 216. *Belfast*, 1788. A. C. B.

DR. WILLIAM CAMPBELL was born in High Street, Newry, of a most respectable family, whose branches have spread very widely throughout the country.\* Having received the best education that the public schools of the town could afford, and, in particular, the instructions of the Rev. James Moody (see ch. lviii.),

\* Dr. Stuart, whose *Memoirs of Armagh* appeared in 1819, calculates that Dr. Campbell's grandmother—"Granny Campbell," as she was called in Newry—had then about *fifteen hundred* living descendants! This venerable lady, Jane Wallace, survived her husband forty-three years, and died in 1727.



minister of the place, he proceeded to the University of Glasgow.

In 1750 he received from the Presbytery of Armagh license to preach the Gospel, but, instead of settling down as minister of a congregation, he accepted a tutorship in the family of the Bagwells of Clonmel. It was then the custom, when the Universities of the nation were shut against all but the adherents of a favoured sect, for Presbyterian families of the higher class to send their sons for education to some private Dissenting academy, and afterwards to travel on the Continent, under the guidance of some accomplished man, chosen to accompany them on their travels, and to read with them on whatever subjects they were desirous to learn. In accordance, therefore, with this practice, Mr. Campbell, in company with young Mr. Bagwell, proceeded to Paris.

In France they resided for seven years, until Mr. C. had learned to speak French with all the grace and fluency of a native. While residing there, his unbending Presbyterian spirit on one occasion subjected him to some inconvenience. Passing one day along the street, he accidentally met a crowd, in the midst of which *the host*—the name by which the consecrated wafer is designated in Roman Catholic countries—was carried along in solemn procession. The usual practice on such occasions was for a man to fall upon his knees till the procession had passed by; but the spirit of his country and of his faith was strong in Campbell, so he stood erect with his hat upon his head, and refused to do homage to what he regarded as no more than a bit of bread. Paris in those ante-revolutionary times was more devout than it is now, so Campbell was instantly seized and hurried away to prison. He pleaded that he was a British subject, and not amenable to their laws and customs, but he spoke French with such ease and accuracy that the authorities would not believe him. When the Bagwells heard what had befallen their tutor, they gave such explanations as induced the authorities to consent to release him, in case he would

say that it was from ignorance of the custom he had refused to comply with it. Even this, nothing could persuade Campbell to say. Eventually the English Ambassador had to interfere in order to procure his release.

On his return from his foreign travels, Mr. Campbell married his cousin, Miss Jane Carlile of Newry, and the next year, 1759, he was ordained at Antrim as minister of the old congregation in connection with the Non-subscribing Presbytery. His stay there, however, did not much exceed five years. It shows how little distinction between subscription and non-subscription was now maintained, that in November, 1764, he left Antrim for Arnagh, and became minister of the first congregation there in connection with the Synod of Ulster.

About 1770 he was occupied with plans for the education of students at college; and it is not improbable that the regulations, made by the Synod in that year with regard to candidates for the ministry, may have taken origin with him. Students, it was arranged, might stay at the University either for two, three, or four years. After a four years' course, of not less than five months in each year, a young man might be licensed at once; but should he attend the University for two sessions only, then six years must elapse between his entrance and his license.

The Synod met at Lurgan in 1773, and appointed Mr. Campbell Moderator. The first of his publications is the Synodical sermon, which he preached the following year when going out of office. It is a heavy and elaborate, but very able, discourse, in which he takes a comprehensive view of the progress of Christianity, and traces the presence of Christ with his Church at all times, in its foundation, preservation, corruption, reformation, and also in the more recent ages. Its merits as an intellectual and literary effort cannot be denied; but the preacher indicates his sympathies, in the approved fashion of all the New Light ministers, by deprecating the utility of creeds and confessions, and

by studiously avoiding to say anything about grace, atonement, repentance, or salvation.

In 1783 Mr. Campbell was very active in seeking from Government an increase of the *Regium Donum*—the annual grant doled out by Parliament to the Presbyterian ministers of Ireland, and which then amounted to the munificent sum of nine pounds apiece! The Lord-Lieutenant was favourable: Lord Charlemont, Lord Templeton, Colonel Stewart of Killymoon, Henry Grattan, and other members of the Irish Parliament, lent their willing assistance; but owing to the influence which was exercised against them, especially by the Earl of Hillsborough, the permanent addition amounted only to one thousand pounds a year—a sum much smaller than they had been led to expect. Mr. Campbell, who had interested himself so much in the matter, was particularly mortified, and could never speak of the transaction afterwards but with regret and disgust. His regret was occasioned by the fact, that he had failed to obtain the ten thousand pounds of addition which he had anticipated; his disgust arose from the unpleasant discovery, that the grant originally given by King William III. to compensate the sufferings and reward the attachment of the Presbyterian ministers, was now regarded by statesmen as a sort of political bribe. The light in which the statesmen of the time viewed the transaction, is evident from a letter in which the Duke of Portland, who was in favour of the larger sum, spoke of the diminished grant as “foolish and impolitic, as it prevented Government of the *most valuable purchase* which it ever had an opportunity of making in Ireland.”

The Presbyterians, however, never regarded the grant in this light. Under the old system, when almost every town was a pocket borough and the county representation in the hands of one or two territorial magnates, ministers were much too poor and humble to have any political weight. All their influence was moral, and that influence, apart altogether from considerations of *Regium Donum* or of gain, was always used, in defer-

ence to higher authority than that of man, to promote religion, peace, and good order, respect for the law, and obedience to civil rulers. From the day that King William signed the order for the first grant in Hillsborough Castle, down till the day that the Irish Church Commissioners paid off the last commuting minister, I am not aware of any Presbyterian minister who either spoke or acted, in his relation to the Government and the people, differently from what he would have done if *Regium Donum* had never been granted. They acted at all times in their relation to Government exactly as they act now, when *Regium Donum* no longer exists, opposing the measures of Government which they think wrong, supporting those which they think right, and inculcating at all times loyalty to the throne and obedience to the law. It is true that they took up arms against Charles I. in Scotland, and against James II. in Ireland; but "oppression makes wise men mad," and no money grant could have ever induced them to live contentedly under tyranny like theirs. But under the House of Hanover, or under any constitutional monarch, Presbyterians never needed a bribe to make them loyal. Any Government acting in accordance with law, striving to promote the peace and temporal good of the community, and protecting all classes of the people in the enjoyment of liberty of conscience, has at all times received, and is ever sure to receive, the loyal obedience of Presbyterians. It is only a bad Government, conscious of its own badness, that ever thinks of bribing any class of its subjects. The Irish Parliament at all times, and Irish administrations generally, were bad, bigoted, partial, and corrupt. It is only from English Governments and English Parliaments that our country has received anything like justice. The Government which acts with strict impartiality and firmness, and at the same time with consideration and kindness to all its people, irrespective of their opinions upon religion, stands in no need of dispensing bribes.

But to return. A thousand pounds per annum,

though much less than they had hoped to receive, was still, even when divided among so many, a little addition to the income of poor ministers; and it was known, besides, that it was through no fault of the Synod's commissioner that the sum was not more. To mark its gratitude for his services, the Synod in 1784 presented Mr. Campbell with a piece of plate of the value of forty guineas. It also offered to present a piece of plate worth twenty guineas to Dr. M'Dowell of Dublin, who had zealously co-operated in negotiating with Government, but he firmly yet kindly declined to accept any acknowledgment. That same year, the University of Glasgow bestowed upon Mr. Campbell the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity.

Soon afterwards, Dr. Campbell found himself engaged in controversy with one of the dignitaries of the Church Establishment. Dr. Woodward, the Bishop of Cloyne, published in 1786 a pamphlet, with the design of showing the claims of the Episcopal Church upon the nation. He dwelt mournfully on the resistance made by the Roman Catholics of the southern counties to the payment of tithe, and the coldness of its own members towards the Established Church. He endeavoured to show that the Church Establishment was so intimately connected with the political constitution that they were virtually one, and that the overthrow of the former would be the deathblow of the latter. He then inferred that as Episcopalians alone could heartily approve of the Church Establishment, they alone could be true to the constitution, and consequently that they and their Church system had claims upon the support of the Government which no other could have.

Substantially, this argument said little more than that Episcopalians alone could be faithful to the Episcopalian Establishment, and that, because they were faithful to it, all other their fellow-subjects were bound to support them—an argument that could convince few, except a prelate or the owner of a fat living. But the peculiar form in which the argument was couched, conveyed the idea, and was intended to convey it, that no



other religious body, except Episcopalians, could be loyal to the State. This unfounded insinuation gave great offence, and called forth a number of replies from the Roman Catholics and Presbyterians. Dr. Campbell, among others, came forward on this occasion. His *Vindication* appeared in 1787. He showed clearly in this pamphlet, that while in this country there was a union between the Church and State, so far that all sects in the country were taxed most unjustly for the benefit of one sect, yet there was no union of such a kind that could not be dissolved without the slightest injury to the political constitution—a position which the great event of 1870, the disestablishment of the Irish Church, has now abundantly confirmed. He pointed out, also, that Presbyterians, while standing entirely separate from the Episcopal Establishment, were the warmest friends of the civil constitution, and that there was not the slightest ground in fact for exciting suspicion in regard to their loyalty. In the course of the discussion, he does not attempt to conceal that his sympathies are entirely with the New Light party in his own Church; he draws a parallel between Athanasius and Thomas à Becket, and can look at neither in any other light than as a disturber of the peace.

The *Vindication* of Dr. Campbell was most effective for the purpose intended; the style was good, the tone moderate, and the reasoning powerful. Dr. Woodward did not produce a separate rejoinder; he only noticed the work in a subsequent edition of his pamphlet. But Dr. Stock, afterwards Bishop of Killala, did come forward formally to reply. Instead, however, of attempting to defend the ground originally taken up by the Bishop of Cloyne, he advanced new charges against the Presbyterians, which he considered himself better able to sustain. Prominent among these was the charge of persecution which he advanced against the Church of Scotland, and for which he held the Presbyterians of this country, on the ground of their identity in principle



with the parent Church, responsible. Stock was an able and vigorous writer, and put forward his case with no small amount of plausibility. Dr. Campbell, in his *Examination*, replied to both antagonists. He maintains his ground in this work with great ability, and repels with effect the new charges which had been advanced. Here again his New Light leanings show themselves in his speaking of creeds and confessions as an *invention*; while his opinion that in Acts xv. we have merely the example of one church consulting another church, proves that even he was not aware of the full amount of support which Scripture lends to the Presbyterian system.

From failing eyesight, he was almost blind at the time when he wrote the *Examination*—so much so indeed, that the reader, who knows his misfortune, is astonished at the accuracy of his references and quotations. His controversial abilities were admitted by his opponents, and, as might be expected, elicited the gratitude and applause of his own party. So soon as the *Vindication* was published, the sub-Synod of Derry and the Non-subscribing Presbytery of Dublin forwarded to the author addresses of congratulation; and now at the end of a century, when all the parties have passed away, any dispassionate judgment to which the whole case is submitted can have, we should think, little difficulty in deciding on what side lay the weight of reason and of argument.

Under these circumstances, and while the remembrance of his services was yet fresh in the public mind, it must have been mortifying in a high degree to a sensitive mind like Dr. Campbell's, that in 1788, the very year in which his *Examination* was published, he was defeated by a great majority in a special meeting of Synod, when seeking the appointment of Agent for Regium Donum, and the Rev. Robert Black of Derry (1777-1817), a young minister, who as yet had rendered no special service to the Church, but who possessed gifts and talents rapidly carrying him on to leader-

ship, was appointed to the vacant post.\* His mortification at this affront, for he could regard it in no other light, the desire of a position better suited to his failing sight and advancing years, and the wish to be near the Bagwells, the friends of his youth, determined him to accept a call to Clonmel, which reached him soon after. On the 14th of September, 1789, he resigned the charge of Armagh, and removed to the South of Ireland to take charge of a small congregation in connection with the Synod of Munster.

We know nothing of Dr. Campbell's closing years. He died on the 17th of November, 1805, leaving behind him the reputation of an accomplished man and an able minister. He was, says the historian of Armagh, "perfectly acquainted with the belles lettres, and with the whole circle of the sciences. His recollection was apt and tenacious, his judgment correct, his language flowing and perspicuous, and his knowledge of history was at once profound and minute. His mind seemed to have been an exact register of dates, anecdotes, and events; and time possessed no power to erase the record of facts engraven on the tablet of his memory."

Again, Dr. Stuart says, "The almost inexhaustible fund of scientific knowledge which Dr. Campbell possessed, his skill in ancient and modern languages, and his perfect acquaintance with the laws, manners, and religions of the continental European nations, rendered him an amusing and instructive companion. As a pulpit orator he was rather monotonous and prolix, subdividing his discourses into multitudinous heads, which perplexed the memory of his hearers; but in mildness, learning, benevolence, and piety, he has perhaps left no man superior to him in the Presbyterian Church of Ulster."

By his marriage with Miss Carlile, Dr. Campbell had eleven children, three of whom survived their father.

\* As the Presbyteries around Derry were very fully represented on this occasion, I cannot but suspect that special influence was used to bring up the friends of one of the candidates. Dr. Campbell did not descend to cleverness of that kind.

His daughter Mary was first married to Dr. S. Maxwell of Armagh, who died in 1785, and afterwards, in 1796, she was married to George Williams, Esq., of Dublin, by whom she had two sons. His daughter Margaret married John Evans of Clonmel; and his daughter Elizabeth married George Murray, Esq., of Armagh.\*

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#### THE TRUE FRIENDS OF THE STATE.

Let us not deceive ourselves, my Lord : let not the nation be deceived. Episcopacy gives no title to superior confidence in the State : your order is not remarkable for consistency : history will justify no such claim : nor will you be able to prove that you are the only cordial friends of the State that can be trusted in perfect consistency of principle. Let me not bring an indiscriminate charge against the members of your Church. *Some* of them were men of generous and noble principles. With them the Presbyterians united in a body, concerted measures for putting this kingdom into a posture of defence, asserted the liberties of their country, and saved this kingdom to the Crown of England by their matchless valour in defending Derry and Enniskillen. And yet, in this very reign, High Church men described above reviled and harassed those illustrious defenders of their country as enemies of the State, and unworthy of enjoying a liberal toleration : and within a few years, a very few years, in the beginning of the succeeding reign, when these heroes had scarcely taught their children the story of their fame, and told their listening neighbours the adventurous deeds of their prowess and hardihood, these illustrious defenders of Derry and Enniskillen beheld with indignation that they were rendered by law incapable of serving that country which they had just saved to the Crown, and defended with such distinguished honour and gallantry. This invidious and dishonourable law was promoted by those men whom they had endeavoured in vain to unite in affection to King William. This was their crime, and it could not be forgiven. It pursued them throughout Queen Anne's reign, and towards the end of it brought down upon them the resentment of the Convocation in a memorial to the Queen, expressed with much severity. The opportunity was well chosen. The Ministry knew their schemes would nowhere meet with more determined opposition than from the Presbyterians. Their violence, therefore, corresponded with the violence of the clergy, and they received their invectives gladly. The times were big with danger. The nation was agi-

\* *Minutes of Synod : Stuart's Armagh : Armstrong's Sketches : Killen's History : Campbell's Works.*

tated with anxious apprehension, torn in pieces by faction and party, and everything threatened to involve this devoted country again in all the horrors of a civil war. But this cloud, fraught with so much mischief and horror, was happily dispelled by the death of the Queen, and peace and happiness restored by the accession of the present royal family to the throne; an event in which none did more zealously concur than Presbyterians, and in which none had greater reason to rejoice. In the reign of George I. they obtained an Act of Toleration on very liberal principles, and in the reign of his present Majesty the Test Act has been repealed, which was so long a disgrace to our statute-book and dishonourable to the nation.—*Vindication*, pp. 63–65.

#### CONVERTS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT.

It will readily be acknowledged, however, that converts are made to the Church; and so have they been to every Established Church, whether Heathen, Mahometan, or Christian, Popish or Protestant. The good things she has to offer have powerful attractions: and we see some of her highest dignities now enjoyed by men who have gone from among us. And the observation is very ancient, and of high authority, that “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” And so it happened in succeeding ages. The ecclesiastical historians, speaking of the reign of Constantine, tell us that some were converted by examining the doctrine, others by the love of honours and the necessity of imitating the ruling powers, and many from dissimulation; that the bishops of Asia, contrary to their faith, condemned the Council of Chalcedon, to gratify the Emperor Basilicus. Julian the Apostate, as has been observed, had his Test Act, and schools and colleges established in support of the heathen temples, and his ideas of making converts have been also very faithfully imitated by Christian Churches, both Popish and Protestant, who have found them equally useful. How far such modes of conversion are suited to the genius of the Christian religion is of a very different consideration, and ought, as it would seem, to command our most serious attention. Coming from so unhallowed a source, it can be no very honourable expedient to support the dignity of a Church that boasts of high perfection; and yet, as if it were essential to her safety, we see how zealously at this day it is retained by the Church of England. But religion in the hands of political men ever assumes the same features. The first Christian Emperor led the way in the manner of proselytising by his imperial edict, and his example has been too well followed, and has deluged the Christian world with torrents of blood, and has been productive of every calamity that could flow from the worst passions of the human heart.—*Examination*, pp. 66–68.

## THE RELIGION FOR A GENTLEMAN.

Dr. Stock tells us that in the opinion of Charles II. the Church of Scotland is not a "religion for a gentleman;" for this very *liberal* writer is studious to omit nothing that might be offensive.

But how was Charles II. qualified to judge of religion? Or why is his opinion adduced as a standard of any authority? Was it for his piety, his love of truth, or those honourable qualities that adorn a king and a gentleman? It would have been useful to tell us what he or this king meant by a *gentleman*. Was it a man of gay and profligate character, that held everything sacred in contempt, capable of the basest hypocrisy, dissimulation, and the breach of the most sacred obligations, human and divine? Then, indeed, Presbyterianism is not the religion of such a gentleman. And it is said, this was the fashionable character of some that were accounted the most accomplished gentlemen of Charles's court. His majesty's character is sufficiently known.

But if by a gentleman is meant a man of a certain dignity of character, of a well-cultivated understanding, elegance of manners, knowledge of the world, and of the duties he owes to his God, to mankind, and to his country, and thinks it a sacred obligation to perform these duties—then such a man might be of the Presbyterian Church, notwithstanding the opinion of this *pious* king.

The most accomplished gentlemen in France composed the court of Henry, King of Navarre, afterwards the greatest of the kings of France, and they were Presbyterians. The young Duke de la Rochefoucault is mentioned as the most elegant and accomplished gentleman, and is particularly lamented, even by his assassins in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. But why need we speak of individuals? Will not the kings of Prussia, the princes of the illustrious house of Orange, and so many sovereign princes in Germany, furnish many instances of gentlemen that were Presbyterians?

Why did not our author tell us, also, what he and his *pious* king meant by the *religion* of a gentleman? Was it an indifference or contempt of everything sacred or honourable? Was it the religion of Hobbes, that is, the established religion or superstition of every country, no matter what it be? Or was it the religion of Loyola, which he is said to have liked as well as his brother James II., though he was too much a gentleman to profess openly the religion he believed?

We hear of a Divine Teacher of religion, who was despised, because none of the rulers, or fine gentlemen among the Jews, believed in Him. And we know His religion was foolishness to the Greeks, who were certainly very fine gentlemen.—*Examination*, pp. 114, 115.



## THE CONTEST WITH JAMES II.

In the contest with King James II., need it be asked whether the Constitution was saved by virtue of these principles of the Established Church, or by deserting them? Not only Protestant Dissenters, but many illustrious members of this Church, saw through the designs and craft of the clergy, and hated this their slavish doctrine. They could plainly discern that, amidst all their cant and fulsome adulation, they only meant themselves and their own power. The King truly was not to be resisted while he was obedient to the clergy, and his divine right must be understood in subserviency to the convenience of the hierarchy. Their passive obedience, their non-resistance, their submission, was all the while conditional; the implied condition was that, however the rights and liberties of the people might be sacrificed, *their* Establishment must be maintained inviolate, and they must be supported in the plenitude of their power and spiritual domination. For no sooner did these *passive* gentlemen perceive themselves in danger than they desert their principles, rouse the nation to resistance, and appeal to the favour of the people against the "Lord's anointed," and to that universal jealousy which prevailed against the encroachments of the Crown. They then forgot the doctrine they had so often taught, that the king was accountable to none but God, and that no one could resist him but under the penalty of eternal damnation.

For a long series of years they had persecuted Protestant Dissenters with unrelenting cruelty. But now, in the hour of danger, they make their application to them, imploring their assistance, and earnestly beseeching them not to remember their former cruelties, for which they declared their sorrow, laying the blame upon the Papists. They protested their earnest desire of peace, and promised they would take effectual care to remove everything which had hitherto prevented our union with them, if we would not hearken to the offers of the court, but would join in averting the present danger. These positive assurances, not only of a toleration, but of a *comprehension*, Bishop Burnet says, passed through his hands, and were transmitted to the Prince of Orange; and he uses this strong expression, that, should these promises be afterwards forgotten, these Churchmen would deserve to be reprobated of God and man. . . .

Protestant Dissenters, with great generosity and zeal, entered into their views, but quickly found their confidence was ill placed; for no sooner was the appearance of danger over, than the old principles resumed their power—High Churchmen thought they had gone too far in their opposition to King James, and had it depended on them, the Revolution had been defeated. A standing army of Englishmen was found to be more inflamed with the love of liberty than the established clergy. James could not depend on the army to support him in violation of the laws and



constitution : the Bishops could be depended upon, and in the Convention Parliament, the majority of the Right Rev. bench voted against the motion that the king had abdicated, and that the throne was vacant. So that King William was advanced to the throne in opposition to the Established clergy.

Protestant Dissenters had contributed very much to the Revolution, and as they had received the strongest assurances of kindness from the High Church party, they now looked for the performance of these promises, and it would seem they had reason to hope for the accomplishment of them ; for King William, in his answer to the addresses of the Dissenting ministers, had assured them that he would employ all his power to obtain a union of his Protestant subjects. The Queen made the same declaration in their favour. And his majesty, early in the session, expressed his hopes to both Houses of his first Parliament that "they would leave room for the admission of *all* Protestants that were able and willing to serve, which conjunction in his service would tend to the better uniting them among themselves, and strengthening them against their common adversaries." But the admission of Dissenters into offices, notwithstanding all their services and all the promises made them, was instantly and strenuously opposed by the High Church party. And even to our day, that party in England has never been able to acquire such liberality of sentiment as to enter into the enlightened views of King William's politics.—*Examination*, pp. 181-185.

## CHAPTER LXXVII.

SAMUEL MARTIN STEPHENSON, M.D.  
(1774—1785),

MINISTER AT GREYABBEY.

1. The *Declaration of Faith* approved by the Reverend Presbytery of Bangor, and read publicly before the Dissenting Congregation of Greyabbey by S. M. Stephenson at his ordination, the 21st day of June, 1774, to which his Reasons for not complying with the Form of Subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith required of him are prefixed, and addressed to the Protestant Dissenters in the North of Ireland. 8vo, pp. 15. 2d ed. *Belfast*, 1774. C. P. L.
2. A *Review of the Reasons* of the Dissent of the Presbytery of Belfast from the Resolution of the Presbytery of Bangor, and of the Remarks upon a late Declaration of Faith, and Reasons for not subscribing the Westminster Confession of Faith. Addressed to the Protestant Dissenters of the North of Ireland. To which is annexed a genuine copy of the "Reasons of the Dissent of Messrs. Alexander [Castlereagh], Huey [Newtownards], Laird [Belfast], Kinkead [Killinchy], and King [Holywood], entered by them on Tuesday, May 31st, 1774, in the Minutes of the Presbytery of Bangor, from the resolution of that Presbytery to ordain Mr. Samuel Stephenson in Greyabbey. pp. 32. *Belfast*, 1775. A. C. B.
3. On the *Linen and Hempen Manufactures* of the Province of Ulster. pp. 80. [One of the Papers of the Belfast Literary Society.]
4. An *Historical Essay* on the Parish and Congregation of Templepatrick, compiled in the year 1824. pp. 48. *Belfast*, 1825. M. C. D.

SAMUEL MARTIN STEPHENSON was born in 1742 at Straidballymorris, in the parish of Templepatrick. His preliminary education was received at Antrim, in a classical school, which was conducted in the session-room of the

Rev. John Ranken (see ch. lxxiv.). He proceeded to the University of Glasgow, where he had the advantage of being trained in Philosophy by Dr. Adam Smith and Dr. Thomas Reid, and the disadvantage of being corrupted in his theological opinions by the lectures of Professor Leechman.

After receiving license to preach the Gospel from the Presbytery of Templepatrick, he obtained a situation in the Diocesan School at Monaghan, and was transferred to the care of the Presbytery of the bounds. There he lodged in the house of a Mr. Braddock, an apothecary, and from him he acquired a taste for the study of medicine, which exercised a material influence on his future career. After two years spent in that position he returned home, and, with the consent of his father, repaired to Dublin for the study of anatomy, and afterwards to Edinburgh, whose medical school even then was adorned by the great names of Cullen, Gregory, Black, and Monro.

During his residence in Dublin, he lodged with the Bells of Charles Street, who were natives of Greyabbey ; and it was probably through their influence that he was invited to preach in the congregation of that town, then vacant by the death of the Rev. Hugh Dickson (1742-1771). It was in August, 1773, that Mr. Stephenson first preached in Greyabbey. He was presented with a call from the people, and forthwith put on trials by the Presbytery of Bangor.

On the 19th of April, 1774, the trials were completed. The discourse, upon 2 Cor. v. 19, which he delivered that day, was understood by some to convey opinions at variance with the orthodox doctrines of the corruption of human nature by the Fall and of the Atonement of Christ. Afterwards, when examined on Philosophy, Church History, and Divinity, he gave satisfactory answers only to some of the questions proposed ; and when asked to subscribe the Confession of Faith, even according to the loose formula which then satisfied the Presbytery of Bangor, he mentioned some difficulties which lay in the way of his compliance

with that requirement. The Presbytery having thus ascertained the state of the case, postponed its decision till the next meeting.

The next meeting was held at Belfast on the 31st of May. Commissioners appeared from Greyabbey praying that effect might be given to the unanimous choice of the congregation with all convenient speed, and that the ordination might be appointed "without regard had to subscription to any human composition on their account." What occurred may best be told in the words of the *Minutes* of Presbytery:—

"Mr. Stephenson, after a long conference with the Presbytery, particularly with respect to the points which were discussed at last meeting, and having answered to that question, whether he believed that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was a Divine Being by nature or by office? answered that he believed He was Divine by nature: and having also removed the greatest part of the scruples entertained against him at last meeting, respecting the doctrine of Christ's atonement for the sins of true believers, to the satisfaction of the most of the members now present, he was asked whether he would subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith or not? to which he answered in the negative. After which the question was put, proceed to ordination or not? and it was carried by one vote, Ordain.

"Upon which the following brethren dissented from the resolution of the Presbytery, viz., Messrs. Alexander, Huey, Laird, Kinkead, and King, and promised to give their reasons in due time.

"Mr. Stephenson being asked whether he would accept of the call of the congregation of Greyabbey or not, answered in the affirmative; upon which this Presbytery have fixed the time of his ordination to be the 21st of June."

Upon the 21st of June the Presbytery met at Greyabbey for the ordination, but none of the brethren who dissented were in attendance. Mr. Stephenson read before the Presbytery a written declaration of his faith,

a copy of which is here inserted, and this declaration was accepted by the Presbytery instead of subscription to the Confession. Reasons of dissent on the part of the minority were handed in and read; but they were not entered on the *Minutes*, as the majority were of opinion that they did not represent accurately what occurred at the meeting of the 31st of May. The reasons were accordingly held over for consideration till next meeting; but before next meeting the Synod of Ulster divided the Presbytery of Bangor, and the minority, along with others favourable to subscription, were formed into a new Presbytery, known ever since as the Presbytery of Belfast.

The formula of subscription to which Mr. Stephenson refused to attach his signature at Greyabbey, was in these words:—"I believe the most important doctrines of Christianity are contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith." This form had been adopted by the Presbytery, in order to meet the wishes of those who scrupled to accept the stricter terms of the Synod's formula of subscription. It is quite obvious that an intelligent Pagan, Jew, or Mohammedan might have signed the Bangor formula with a safe conscience. The candidate for ordination was not required, according to its terms, to profess faith in a single doctrine or precept of Christianity; all the Presbytery asked was that he should profess to believe, that the Westminster Confession of Faith contained the most important doctrines of Christianity. To subscribe this sham formula was a farce. Mr. Stephenson could have signed it without the slightest breach of truth, but he was too candid and honest to enter the ministry under a false pretence. He knew well that to attach his name to such a form, while in reality it bound him to the belief of no Christian doctrine whatever, would be understood by his congregation and the public as pledging him to accept every iota of the Confession of Faith. He deserves credit for refusing to be a party to such a sham profession of orthodoxy as the Presbyterian formula embodied. The written declaration which he subsequently handed



in to the Presbytery, was a hundred-fold more satisfactory than if he had signed the empty statement which he was asked to subscribe. His own paper bound him to the belief of some of the great doctrines of Christianity; but he could have done all that the Presbytery required, without believing any of them.

On the other hand, Mr. Stephenson's declaration, viewed simply by itself, seems to me a very defective statement of what ought to be believed by a minister of Christ. Its omissions produce the serious impression, that its author either did not know, or that if he knew he did not believe, the grand distinctive features of the Gospel message, and consequently that, however excellent intellectually and morally he may have been, he was not qualified to teach others the Divine plan of human salvation. He seems to have left the Trinity as well as the doctrine of grace out of his system, and, therefore, instead of being in a position to guide others, he needed some one to teach himself "the way of God more perfectly." Had he received at Glasgow the theological training which was needed for the Christian ministry, he would have possessed every qualification of character and of education necessary to an efficient and successful preacher of the Gospel. But he suffered under the injury which Leechman did him, till the last day of his life.

After the ordination, the minority published their *Reasons of Dissent* from the finding of Presbytery on the 31st of May, with some *Remarks* appended in the name of the Rev. John King of Holywood (see ch. lxxviii.) It elicited from Mr. Stephenson a *Review* of these reasons. This brings out the difference that there was between him and them as to a matter of fact. They said that he declined to sign either the Synod's formula or the Presbytery's formula, or to write out and sign a statement of his own. In the preface annexed to the declaration he denies stoutly that he ever refused to write out and sign a statement of his own; and in the *Review of the Reasons* he enters into the subject more minutely, and shows that he never refused to make and



subscribe a declaration of his faith. In the course of the controversy, it comes out that the error in reference to the Atonement, alleged against the trial sermon, is, that he could not reconcile it with justice that the innocent should suffer for the guilty, and also that it was the elders of the Presbytery who gave the majority of one in favour of the ordination.

In the year 1776, Mr. Stephenson graduated as an M.D. at Edinburgh, after defending a thesis *De Typho*, the disease for the successful treatment of which he obtained afterwards such a high reputation. Greyabbey presented a wide field for the exercise of his medical skill; but Dr. Stephenson was not disposed to charge for his advice, and a clerical physician is under any circumstances more likely to secure practice than to pocket fees. The salary promised him by the congregation at his ordination was fifty pounds only. With the generosity which distinguished him through life, he declined the ordinary security for the payment of what was promised in the call, telling the Presbytery on the day of his ordination that he considered the affection of his people as the best security, and desired no other. The usual results of an over-much generosity followed. His requirements soon went beyond his means, and the demand did not bring the supply. He had married Mary, daughter of the Rev. James Armstrong (1739-1779) of Portaferry, and as his family began to multiply, he discovered that on his limited income it would be impossible to provide for them. The consequence was that on the 1st of August, 1785, he resigned the charge of the congregation of Greyabbey and removed to Belfast, there to commence life anew as a practising physician.

Dr. Stephenson, for nearly half a century afterwards, was one of the most prominent men in Belfast, having few equals, and no superior, in the profession to which he devoted the latter half of his days. He was among the first in Ireland to introduce stimulants and tonics in dealing with fever cases, and his use of them was judicious and generally successful, multitudes owing

their life under Providence to his skill and care. With a generosity that does him honour, he never made any charge when prescribing for the family of a minister, taught no doubt as he was by his own experience of their limited means—an example which the best of the Belfast physicians since, to their great credit, have not been slow to follow. In the most intellectual circles that Belfast society then could afford, he took a prominent and honoured place. He was one of the founders of the Linen Hall Library; he was a member of the Literary Society, and often wrote for it papers on antiquarian and historical subjects; and he took a leading part in the establishment of the Academical Institution, founded for imparting a home education to all Irish students who might take advantage of it without distinction of sect or class. Every literary and charitable institution of Belfast was certain to have Dr. Stephenson among its zealous friends. His voice was always given for strict honesty and economy in the disbursement of public money, and the public had entire confidence in his integrity and character.

In 1818 the Synod of Ulster, in token of their personal respect, restored his name to the roll of ministers, although he had been without charge for more than thirty years and devoted to other pursuits—the highest compliment in their power to his intellectual and moral worth. After 1821 he gradually withdrew from public life, amusing his declining years with literary and agricultural pursuits. One of the papers which he prepared, when above eighty years of age, for the Literary Society, on the history and antiquities of his native parish, was published in 1825. He contrives to draw into that essay much historical matter, and among other things, it contains this very remarkable statement in regard to the parish of Templepatrick in 1824—“There is not even now any Roman Catholic in the parish a landholder, nor a Church of England family.”

Dr. Stephenson died on the 13th of January, 1833. A remarkable thing about him is, that although he was, as I believe, a Unitarian, and certainly a Non-subscriber,

he did not withdraw his name from the Synod roll when the Remonstrants seceded in 1829, and his death is recorded in the Minutes of the Synod of Ulster for 1833.

"He preserved through life," says a writer in the *Bible Christian* for February 1833, "a remarkable attachment to those simple manners and phraseology which prevail among the most enlightened and respected part of the Presbyterian rural population in Ulster. From having been educated both as a divine and a physician, his pursuits were more varied than is usual; he had a great diversity of knowledge, and great opportunity of diffusing it; he had a lively wit, originality and quaintness in his conversation, which often turned upon antiquities, mechanical arts, rural economy, and statistical inquiries. He was much beloved by his patients, and his society sought after by their families. To the poor he was peculiarly attached, and whenever he acted as a physician to the Poorhouse, the Dispensary, or Hospital, his regularity and devotedness to his duties were most exemplary, and almost unequalled."

"He was," says Dr. Montgomery, "a good historian, a considerable natural philosopher, no mean antiquary, and an excellent man. He was fond of the society of the young, whom he endeavoured always to draw out and to improve, and whom he delighted with his quaint humour and judicious observations. He was singular in many respects, and in none more so than in this, that he was always more courteous and attentive to the unfortunate than to the prosperous, and to require his aid was to secure his interest."\*

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#### HIS DECLARATION OF FAITH.

I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God: that they are the only infallible rule of

\* *Minutes of the Presbytery of Bangor: Stephenson's Works: Bible Christian*, February 1833: *Irish Unitarian Magazine* for 1847, p. 290: Reid's *MS. Catalogue* and Killen's *History: Minutes of Synod of Ulster*.

faith and manners : that nothing can be added to or taken from this Word which we have received, without offending the Author : and although many human composures may assist us in acquiring the knowledge of Divine things, yet that none of them should be substituted in place of the Scriptures of truth, or so esteemed as to lessen our regard for the Word of God.

I believe that there is one God, who is the great first cause of all things : that He is a pure, independent, eternal, unchangeable Spirit, possessed of infinite power and the most perfect wisdom, justice, holiness, goodness, and truth : that He created the heavens and the earth, and every living nature which existeth and moveth in them : that He preserveth all things in being : that His absolute dominion is over all the work of His hands : that He disposeth all things according to the spotless rectitude of His own unerring counsels.

I believe that His providence extendeth to every creature, and that it will at length appear in favour of righteousness and true holiness.

I believe that there is a difference between good and evil, virtue and vice : that mankind can discern this difference, and can choose the former and refuse the latter, so as to be the proper objects of rewards and punishments.

I believe that God created man in His own image, with understanding and conscience, with pious and brotherly affections, and with a power of acting according to these ; yet that he wandered from the ways of understanding, and sought out for himself many inventions, and so far estranged himself from God, defaced His image, destroyed His law originally written upon the human heart, so that the saying of the Apostle, "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," is verified by experience.

I believe that God, at sundry times and divers manners, spake unto the fathers of the Jewish nation by Moses and the Prophets : and that He, in the fulness of time, spake unto the world by His only-begotten and well-beloved Son.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God : that He is Divine by nature : that He is the brightness of the Father's glory—the express image of His person : that by Him were all things created, visible and invisible : that He is the only Mediator between God and man, the true Messiah, the Redeemer of the world, formerly spoken of by Moses and the Prophets, who, being in form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God ; yet, in order to perform the great work of our redemption, He took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : that in the days of His flesh He published the everlasting Gospel, and did and suffered whatever is recorded of Him in the Scriptures in order to reconcile us to God : that He died to take away the sins of the world, and thus hath procured eternal redemption for all those who believe in Him, and endeavour sincerely to obey the Gospel ; for, saith the Apostle, "We

have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins ;" that having made atonement for the people, and by one sacrifice of Himself perfected for ever them that are sanctified, He rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, for our justification : that He ascended up on high, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, to make intercession for the truly penitent : that He is the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church, and that He shall come to judge the world at the last day.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is concerned in the great work of our salvation : that He is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son : that He spake by the Prophets, and, according to our blessed Lord's promise, led the Apostles into all truth, enabling them to work the miracles performed by them, and that He is the guide and sanctifier of all good Christians, in a way which is consistent with infinite wisdom and the rational and accountable nature of man ; and that in this way, as well as by His Word and ordinances, Christ will be with all His faithful disciples to the end of the world.

I believe that the human soul is immortal : that the cultivation of the powers of our minds in this world is necessary in order to obtain the happiness of the blessed in a future life : that as without faith no man can please God, so "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

I believe there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust : that God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ : and that there shall then be a final retribution of rewards and punishments according to the prevailing temper and disposition of our minds, and then the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

S. M. STEPHENSON.

GRAYABBEY, *June 21st, 1774.*

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#### FORMULA OF SUBSCRIPTION.

*Form used by the Synod in 1720.*

Reserving to ourselves the benefit of the Pacific Act, we do believe the Westminster Confession of Faith to be founded on the Word of God, and therefore, as such, by this our subscription, we own the said Confession to be the Confession of our Faith.

*Form used by Presbytery of Bangor in 1774.*

I believe that all the important doctrines of the Christian religion are contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith.\*

\* These forms of subscription, given by Mr. Stephenson in the *Notes* to his pamphlet, are inserted here to make the extract which follows them more intelligible.



Instead of the Synod's plain, precise form, they have substituted another trifling equivocal one, calculated for no other purpose than an imposition upon the people by a show of orthodoxy, while the Confession of Faith is subscribed neither in act nor intention. The form produced to me is in the highest degree *evasive*, and the form which is inserted in the 9th page of the *Remarks* is liable to every objection that *it* is. It implieth neither the belief of the Confession of Faith, nor of the Scriptures, nor of the Christian religion. In such terms one might subscribe to the Koran of Mahomet. For I can declare that the Koran contains all the principal doctrines of Mahometanism without believing one word of the Koran, and that all the principal doctrines of the Church of Rome are contained in the Decrees of the Council of Trent without being a Papist. A heathen can declare that he believes all the important doctrines of the Christian religion are contained in the Westminster Confession, and still continue an infidel. . . .

After what I have said of the Confession of Faith in my reasons for not subscribing it, I need scarce inform you I have no dislike to it, further than it contains doctrines different from the Scriptures. I dislike subscription to it as a term of communion or a test of belief; and I detest the thought of deceiving the people by using such an evasion as the dissentients have introduced. Mr. King, the pretended author of the *Remarks*, informs us that he hath authority to assure me that the Presbytery of Belfast did not enter their dissent for my refusing to subscribe the W. C. only. I can, on the other hand, assure him, if I had subscribed to their evasive form, their dissent would never have been entered.—*Review*, pp. 9 and 12.



## CHAPTER LXXVIII.

*JOHN KING* (1754—1777),

MINISTER AT HOLYWOOD.

1. *Remarks* upon the Declaration and Reasons for not Subscribing to the Confession of Faith. pp. 23, 8vo. 1774. W. D. K.
2. A *Vindication* of the Presbytery of Belfast against Mr. Stephenson's Review of Mr. King's *Remarks*. pp. 32. *Belfast*, 1775.

PREVIOUS to his settlement at Holywood, John King was a licentiate of the Presbytery of Route. He seems to have been imprudent in his discourse, much too ready to repeat mere rumour, without regard to its effect on others or on himself. On the 16th of May, 1754, while passing through his trials previous to ordination, he was censured by the Presbytery of Bangor for rash and incautious speaking in regard to the moral character of Mr. John Anderson, a Scottish probationer who had come to preach on trial in the Third Congregation of Belfast, and who was nearly chosen as assistant to the Rev. William Laird. Perhaps a little jealousy of strangers lay at the root of Mr. King's imprudent observations; but some members of the congregation, who were attached to Anderson, resented them highly, and drew down upon King the condemnation of the Presbytery. Whether there was or was not in the slander an element of truth, it would be difficult to say; but the whole transaction was not very creditable to King.

On the 3d of December, 1754, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Bangor as minister of the orthodox congregation of Holywood—that is, the section which

had seceded from the ministry of the Rev. Michael Bruce (see ch. xxxix.) in 1729. Both congregations were weakened by division, and neither was very able to maintain a minister. Mr. King was promised only twenty pounds for the first year, and twenty-five pounds for every year after.

A case that came before a Committee of Presbytery, which met at Holywood on the 28th of April, 1761, presents a picture of narrowness and poverty, in such striking contrast to the generosity of the Presbyterian people in the present generation, that we are tempted to quote it :—

“Before this Committee appeared Messrs. William Kennedy, Samuel Shanks, David Rapheal, William Jackson, James Hutcheson, Alexander Georly, and Thomas Lusk, complaining that the Committee of the congregation have cessed or applotted the money for paying the minister’s stipend upon the seats in the meeting-house unequally ; that is, not exactly and impartially, according to the length and breadth of the several seats.

“The Committee, after long and mature deliberation, and after having conversed and reasoned with the parties, came unanimously to the following resolutions :—

“1. That the Committee of the congregation of Holywood have taken great pains, and are worthy of much commendation on account of their diligence : and that if they have made any mistakes, they are but very small, and seem to be undesigned.

“2. That inasmuch as the congregation seem to be in a prosperous condition, and Mr. King hath taken very much fatigue and trouble upon him in collecting money in order to have a decent meeting-house built,—on this account, and upon the principles of common justice, as well as on account of their Commissioners’ promises made to the Presbytery before Mr. King’s ordination, therefore we recommend it to the congregation to add forty shillings per annum, viz., about eightpence per seat, to his stipend, and that this be applotted on the seats in the meeting-house equally with the rest of the stipend.

“3. That in order to take away all disputes if possible, the Committee of the congregation shall make a new regulation of the prices of the seats in the meeting-house, by measuring from the pulpit to the gables, and from the side angles of the pulpit towards the east and west ends, and from the front of the pulpit to the end of the aisle, in order to find a central seat : and that there be at least as much overplus to make the payments good as there is at present : and this exclusive of the minister’s seat, which, though it is to be measured in order to find the central seat, yet it is not to pay toward making up the quota of stipend : and

further, that there be no allowance in this scheme for the breadth of the alley as to the distance of the seats from the pulpit on the east and west ends ; but not so as to the aisle, for that it shall be allowed the benefit of the alley.

"The above resolutions were read in the meeting-house to the congregation, and all parties acquiesced."\*

Mr. King was one of the minority of the Presbytery who dissented from the ordination of the Rev. S. M. Stephenson at Greyabbey in 1774. The *Reasons of Dissent* sent by him and others to the Presbytery were received, but before being entered on the Minutes, they were held over for consideration till the next meeting. Before next meeting the Synod formed the minority into a separate Presbytery, so that the *Reasons* were never judicially considered. This led to their publication, accompanied with *Remarks*, attributed to Mr. King, which even Dr. Bruce admits to be "sensible and not intemperate." It contains a not unfair statement of the case between Mr. Stephenson and those members of the Presbytery who dissented from the act of ordaining him, and points out how defective his declaration is as a statement of the faith of a Gospel minister. It is dated from Holywood, September 24th, 1774.

Mr. Stephenson lost no time in reviewing these *Remarks*, and in answer to his review, Mr. King published his *Vindication*. No copy of this pamphlet has come into my hands.

Mr. King died on the 20th of August, 1777. He could not have been a very interesting preacher, if there be any point in the words of a Belfast wit, who was once invited by a friend to go and hear him preach—

"I cannot go, I will not go to hear John King, so dull ;

His meeting-house for me shall be as empty as his skull."†

Even then, we do not think that it was possible to secure a very interesting preacher at the rate of £25 a year ; and the doctrines of the Gospel, preached by Paul himself, would seem worse than dull to the friends of an opposite system. The epigram most probably is

\* MS. *Minutes* of Bangor, April 28th, 1761.

† *Bible Christian*, vol. i. p. 171.

not so redolent of wit and truth as of the *odium theologicum*, from a strong tinge of which New Light people, notwithstanding a high profession of superior enlightenment and charity, were not more exempt than their orthodox neighbours.

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#### MR. STEPHENSON'S SUBSCRIPTION.

The plain question is no more nor truly any less than this, viz., whether or not he, or any other candidate for the ministry of the Gospel, hath a right to be ordained to that important office and received into fellowship, upon such terms as he might think proper to prescribe as in his opinion the best, notwithstanding those who are to ordain him may think otherwise, and although he hath not given any evidence satisfactory to them that he is duly qualified for such a trust, or that he believeth even the important doctrines of that holy religion which they are required to set him apart to teach and inculcate upon others. This is the state of the case which is submitted to the impartial reader. And now, that those who are to ordain any candidate for this sacred office have to try and be satisfied with respect to such intransigent, his learning and soundness in the Christian faith, I apprehend, will clearly follow from the considerations hereunto subscribed, viz. :

Religion is strictly a personal thing, and every man hath an indefeasible right to search the Scriptures for himself, and to worship God according to what appeareth to him to be His will. And as many as are agreed in their sentiments of religion have a right to join together and worship in a social capacity, without impediment or hindrance from others, or their intruding or imposing anything upon them, as matter of belief or practice, which they are not convinced is their duty to receive or observe. These sentiments, it is apprehended, rest upon the same foundation with the Reformation from Popery. Besides, the Apostle tells us, "Every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind." Upon the same principle, one or more Christians have a right to agree with and adopt that sense of the Scriptures which others put upon it, upon conviction that it is right. And this reasoning will equally apply to ministers or preachers of the Gospel. And if any such attempt to intrude upon their Christian brethren contrary to the right of conscience, it is the intruders who are then chargeable with lording it over God's heritage, breach of charity, raising divisions, &c.

As touching this writer's denial that any man, or body, or society of men hath authority from Jesus Christ to require subscription to any human composure as a term of admission into His Church, why, truly I am of his opinion, and own I never

heard of subscription being required to baptism, which is the solemn institution by which intrants are admitted into the Church of Christ. Nay, to please him more, I shall go further, and I deny that any man or body of men hath authority expressly from Jesus Christ to require subscription to a Divine composure, or the Bible itself, as the term of admission into His Church. And this I shall extend to the admission of candidates for the ministry into that high office, as this is what I suppose he intendeth by admission into the Church. And what of all this? However, I think it is evident from many passages of Scripture that our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles have given repeated general directions about this important matter. Thus, Matt. vii. 15, he cautions to beware of false prophets. The Apostle Paul directs [here he quotes 1 Tim. v. 22, 1 John iv. 1, Gal. i. 9, and Titus i. 9].

From these and many other texts in the New Testament, which it were easy to quote, it evidently appeareth that there is authority from Jesus Christ and His Apostles sufficient to justify all the use of it that is contended for, namely, to show that those who are empowered to ordain a candidate for the ministry are allowed to take proper methods to try his abilities and religious sentiments previous to that. But what those methods are, or in what particular form and manner they are to proceed, is not expressly determined in the Scriptures.—*Remarks*, pp. 5-8.

## CHAPTER LXXIX.

WILLIAM CRAWFORD, D.D. (1766—1801),

MINISTER AT STRABANE AND HOLYWOOD.

1. *Remarks on the late Earl of Chesterfield's Letters to his Son.* pp. 146. London, 1776. A. C. B.
2. *Dissertations on Natural Theology* by John Alphonso Turretine, translated into English. 2 vols. Belfast, 1777-78. M. C. D.
3. *The Connection betwixt Courage and the Moral Virtues* considered; in a Sermon preached before the Volunteer Company of Strabane Rangers on 12th September, 1779. [Prov. xxviii. 1.] pp. 26. Strabane, 1779. A. C. B.
4. *The Nature and Happy Effects of Civil Liberty* considered; in a Sermon preached before Colonel Stewart, Lieutenant-Colonel Charlton, the Strabane Volunteers, Strabane Rangers, and Urney Foresters, on Sunday, 19th March, 1780. [Lev. xxv. 10.] pp. 26. Strabane, 1780.
5. *A History of Ireland* from the Earliest Period to the Present Time; in a Series of Letters addressed to William Hamilton, Esq. 2 vols. 8vo. Strabane, 1783. M. C. D.

DR. CRAWFORD was a member of one of the oldest and most respectable Presbyterian families in Ireland, being the great-great-grandson of the Rev. Andrew Stewart, minister of Donegore (1627-1634). His great-grandfather was the Rev. Thomas Crawford, also minister of Donegore (1655-1670). His grandfather was the Rev. Andrew Crawford of Carnmoney (1694-1726), for a long time clerk to the Synod of Ulster; and his father was the Rev. Thomas Crawford (1724-1782), minister of Crumlin. His mother was Anne M'Cay, sister to the mother of Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton, author of the *Cottagers of*



*Glenburnie*. Talent seems to have been hereditary in the family. One of the sons of the minister of Crumlin settled as a physician at Lisburn; another, Dr. Adair Crawford, was "one of the most distinguished scholars and physicians of his age;" another, the subject of the present sketch, was, like his ancestors for many generations, a learned and accomplished clergyman.

William Crawford was the oldest son of the family. He was ordained as minister of Strabane on the 6th of February, 1766. His first literary work was occasioned by the publication of the Earl of Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*. Mr. Crawford's *Remarks* are couched in the form of a dialogue between Constantius, a tutor, and Eugenius, a pupil, wherein the former points out to the latter the false principles of morality which lie at the foundation of the *Letters*, and exposes the art by which a father teaches his own son to practise depravity, and to spread the gloss of the world over dark deeds of sin. This work gained the author no small reputation as a moralist and a critic, and in some of the colleges, particularly at Oxford, it was put into the hands of the students as an antidote to Chesterfield's work.

In the two following years he published a translation of the *Natural Theology* of the younger Turretine, in two volumes. To those who valued the cold defensive theology of the eighteenth century, this work must have been very acceptable, for it gives prominence to the light of nature and the Christian evidences, while it keeps in the background, if it does not undervalue, the peculiarities of the Christian system. The translator merely followed his original, and the work itself is now superseded by better books.

Two *Volunteer Sermons*, one in 1779, the other the year after, followed his translation of Turretine. These were military and moral orations, expressed in good language, very slightly sprinkled with the Gospel element, but profusely filled with exhortations to virtue and valour. Ulster was then excited by the Volunteer movement, and gilded visions of national independence and liberty dazzled the eyes of the populace: while the

clergy in all the churches shared largely in the patriotic mania of the hour.

The *History of Ireland* appeared in 1783. In that year the two volumes of which it consists were printed in Strabane. It is a series of letters addressed to a friend, written in an easy and popular style, dealing with the most important events of Irish history, but making no pretensions to original research. Its principal value now is the account that it gives of the Hearts of Oak, the Hearts of Steel, the Volunteers, and other persons and events of the writer's own time. It was dedicated to Lord Charlemont, and was published by subscription. The list of the subscribers given is long and interesting, containing the names of all the leading people of Ulster in the days of the Volunteers.

Dr. Crawford gave a considerable portion of his time to educational as well as to literary and congregational matters. His bold attempt to found an academy at Strabane for the instruction of candidates for the ministry deserves to be noticed here, as being the last of those attempts on the part of private individuals to supply home education for the clergy. They commenced with Mr. Gowan of Antrim (see ch. vi.); they were carried on by M'Alpin at Killeleagh, Hutcheson in Dublin (ch. xlv.), and now by Dr. Crawford; but soon afterwards they were superseded by the foundation of the Academical Institution in Belfast.

In the *Minutes* of the Synod of Ulster for 1786 we find the first allusion to the Strabane Academy in the following words:—

“*Resolved*, That if any gentleman shall, by the approbation of this Synod, set up an academy in which Logic, Mathematics, and Moral Philosophy shall be taught, in this case a certificate, from the gentleman conducting the Academy, of six months' attendance and corresponding improvement, shall be considered by the respective Presbyteries within our bounds as equal to a certificate of one season's attendance in any University; and that Dr. Crawford of Strabane is looked upon as a very proper person to preside in such Academy.”

Next year the Strabane Academy was in full opera-

tion, as we find from the following reports presented that year to the Synod:—

“On reading the Minute of last Synod respecting the Strabane Academy, the following reports from the members that attended the examinations were produced and read:—

REPORT 1ST.

“That they attended the General Examination, 1st February 1787, when the students showed such proficiency in the several sciences of Logic, Metaphysics, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Rhetoric, and the critical knowledge of the Latin language, as was highly satisfactory to the Committee, and gave the fullest proofs of the abilities and attention of the masters.

ANDREW ALEXANDER.  
ROBERT BLACK.  
JOSEPH LOVE.  
HUGH HAMILL.

REPORT 2D.

“*Strabane, May 1st, 1787.*—We, the undersigned, attended an examination of the students in the following branches of Moral Philosophy, viz., Ethics, Economics, and Jurisprudence; of Natural Philosophy, viz., Electricity, Optics, Astronomy, and Magnetism; of the Greek language critically and by analysis; of Mathematics, viz., Algebra, the Terrestrial and Celestial Globes—in all which the students gave good proof of their intelligence and application, and of their having studied with profit and advantage under able and indefatigable masters.

ANDREW ALEXANDER.  
DAVID YOUNG.  
JOSEPH LOVE.  
ROBERT BLACK.  
HUGH HAMILL.

“The Synod expressed the highest satisfaction with the above reports.”

How long the Academy was maintained I have not been able to ascertain, but I suspect it did not live very long, as the annual reports soon disappear from the face of the *Minutes*. The difficulties in the way were great. It was owing to the enterprise of an individual minister that the attempt was ever made; his influence and energies, of course, were limited; and the Church has always preferred to receive service of this nature at the hands of strangers.

In October, 1798, Dr. Crawford resigned the charge

of the congregation, and removed to Holywood to take the pastorate of the old congregation there. He died in 1801. His leanings, as well as those of his father, were to New Light views, but he did not make himself a prominent advocate of any school of theological opinion. He was a man of great application and considerable learning, and his life was not only blameless, but actively employed in doing good.\*

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#### THE WHITEBOYS.

In 1761 the Earl of Halifax was appointed to the government of Ireland. It was in his administration that the southern parts of the kingdom were first disturbed by the rising of the Whiteboys. As those concerned in it were Roman Catholics, it occasioned for some time a serious and a general alarm. Deep-rooted prejudices and former jealousies, ready to be awakened by any circumstance which could bear an unfavourable construction, produced in the minds of Protestants the usual effect. Though those of the better sort, from whom danger only could be apprehended, were not concerned in these disturbances, it was believed that, under a pretence of remedying public grievances, a deep-laid plot was formed against the State. . . . These were absurd and groundless suspicions with respect to the real cause and object of this commotion. . . .

Educated in the principles of religious liberty, and a friend to universal toleration, George I. mitigated the execution of the penal laws against Popery enacted in the preceding reign. George II. followed his example. This encouraged the natives of the South of Ireland to turn their thoughts to agriculture. The lands were in general occupied by those who cultivated them. Villages and hamlets covered the face of the country, provisions were cheap, and the poor able to procure for themselves with some comfort the necessities of life. But, from the cause mentioned above [a murrain among cattle on the Continent], a foreign demand for butter and beef became uncommonly great. In proportion those articles rose in value, until at last they grew to an immoderate price. Hence ground appropriated to grazing was more valuable than that under tillage. Cotters, being tenants at will, were everywhere dispossessed of their little holdings, which in considerable tracts were set by the landlords to monopolisers, who by feeding cattle were enabled to pay them a higher rent. In this manner even whole baronies were laid open to pasturage.

\* *Minutes of Synod: Reid's MS. Catalogue: Reid and Killen's History: Shaw Mason's Statistical Survey*, vol. ii. p. 270.

Pressed by want of subsistence, numbers of the poor fled to large cities or emigrated to foreign countries. Those who remained took small spots of land, consisting of about an acre each, at an exorbitant price, by which they laboured to procure if possible the means of support for themselves and their miserable families. To lessen somewhat the burdens by which they were oppressed, some of their landlords granted them the liberty of commonage. The relief was but temporary, for some time after, in breach of justice and positive compact, they were deprived of this privilege. Tithes and the small price given for labour, which, notwithstanding the increased price of necessities, did not exceed the wages given in the days of Elizabeth, were circumstances which aggravated their distresses.

As the calamities of these unhappy creatures arose principally from the extravagant price of land, a number of them, either ignorant or incapable of the proper mode of redress, had recourse to illegal expedients to oblige the proprietors to set it on more reasonable terms. At night, covered with white shirts, they assembled in parties, and turned up the ground in several places. Bullocks, several of whom they destroyed, were particular objects of their resentment. Besides these, they levelled the enclosures of the commons, and committed various acts of violence. As I have mentioned, an opinion immediately arose and was circulated that this was the beginning of an insurrection against Government. Numbers of the rioters were apprehended in the counties of Limerick, Cork, and Tipperary. Judge Aston was sent to try them on a special commission, but not for high treason, as several of the bills were intended. A few guilty of felony were condemned and executed. These wretched men, instead of being treated as objects of compassion, whom extreme misery had forced into this unwarrantable opposition to law, were prosecuted in some places with great severity. Aston did his duty, but in the discharge of it would not violate the dictates of humanity. On his return from Dublin, he was witness to a sight most affecting, and which he must have beheld with the highest satisfaction. For above ten miles from Clonmel, both sides of the road were lined with men, women, and children, who, as he passed along, kneeled down and supplicated Heaven to bless him as their protector and guardian angel.—*History of Ireland*, vol. ii., Letter lxxvii.

#### THE HEARTS OF OAK.

Two years subsequent to the breaking out of the commotion which was the subject of my last letter, part of the province of Ulster was disturbed by one of a similar kind, but which proceeded in some respects from a different cause, and was of much shorter duration.

To the improvement of every country and utility of the inhabitants, good roads are of essential advantage. But in



making them, justice requires that the trouble and expense should be divided in proportion to the circumstances of those who are to reap advantage from them. This equitable rule had not been duly observed by our Legislature. By an Act of Parliament the making and repairing highways was formerly a heavy burden on those of the lower stations. A housekeeper who had no horse was obliged to work at them six days in the year. If he had a horse, the labour of both for an equal time was required by law. Besides this oppression, the poor complained that they were frequently compelled to work at roads made for the convenience of individuals, which were of no manner of advantage either to themselves or to the public.

Guided by an impulse which would not listen to the suggestion of reason, in 1763 they had recourse to a method which pointed out, as they thought, immediate deliverance from these hardships. Having been particularly irritated by a road proposed to be made in a part of the county of Armagh, the inhabitants of a parish more immediately affected by it rose almost unanimously, and declared they would make no more highways of the kind. As a mark of distinction they put oaken branches in their hats, from which they called themselves Oak Boys. Those particularly concerned in superintending new roads and in repairing the old were the first objects of their resentment; but very soon they turned their attention to other matters of complaint. The clergy, they alleged, exacted from them unreasonable tithes; the rent of their lands was more than they could bear. Besides, there were difficulties to which they were subject. As new grievances opened to view, which they resolved to redress, the number of their partisans increased. The infection was communicated from parish to parish, until it spread to the counties of Armagh, Tyrone, Derry, and Fermanagh. In their progress they exacted illegal oaths and committed other excesses such as might be expected from a populace under the influence of undirected passion, and who had cast off all subordination to law. Parties of the military were collected from the other provinces, who in a few weeks dispersed the insurgents and restored the public tranquillity. Happily not more than two or three lives were lost. Next session of Parliament, the Act that had so justly been complained of as oppressive was repealed, and a law enacted according to which roads in future were to be made and repaired by a tax to be equally assessed upon the lands of both poor and rich.—*History of Ireland*, ii. 78.

#### THE HEARTS OF STEEL.

The rising of the Steel Boys, as they were called, proceeded from the following cause. An absentee nobleman enjoys a large estate in the county of Antrim, which about this time (1771) was out of lease. In place of an additional rent he proposed to take fines from his tenants of an adequate value. Many of those who



at present occupied the land were not in circumstances to comply with these terms. The fines were paid by others who insisted upon a rent from the immediate tenants greater than they were able to pay. In consequence a number of them were dispossessed. Being thus deprived of their habitations and of the means of subsistence, they became desperate, maimed their cattle, and expressed the strongest resentment against those who were instrumental in reducing them to the state of distress in which they were involved.

One of the insurgents, charged with felony, was apprehended and carried to Belfast, where he was confined in order to be transmitted to the county jail. Provoked by this treatment of their associate, the Steel Boys determined to interpose and save him by force from the punishment with which he was threatened. Their design was speedily known and approved by great numbers, who to assist in the execution of it assembled at the place of rendezvous. Provided with the offensive weapons they were able to procure, several thousands of them proceeded to Belfast to rescue the prisoner. When intelligence of this reached the town, it being resolved not to give him up, he was removed to the barrack, and placed under the guard of a party of soldiers who were quartered there. Shortly after, the Steel Boys arrived and pressed forward to the barrack, firmly determined to accomplish their design. As an evidence of this, some shots were actually exchanged betwixt them and the soldiers. The consequence, in all probability, would have been fatal to many on both sides and to the town, had not a physician of highly respectable character and leading influence interposed, at the risk of his life, and prevailed with those concerned to set the prisoner at liberty. Being delivered up to his associates, they marched off in triumph. One house only experienced the effects of their resentment.

Though many who were engaged in this enterprise returned home and afterwards had no connection with the rioters, they still consisted of a considerable number. It daily increased, until the same spirit extended to the neighbouring counties. Grievances, pretty much the same with those which had inflamed the Oak Boys to insurrection, were now the subjects of their complaint and the objects of their pretended redress. Their excesses were likewise in some measure the same, but much more violent. Besides the oaths which they exacted, and other lesser injuries sustained by individuals, they destroyed houses, and in some instances were guilty of flagrant acts of inhumanity. Some of them were taken and tried at Carrickfergus, but whether from want of evidence, from fear of incurring the resentment of the populace, or from partiality in the witnesses and the jury, they were acquitted. On this account the Legislature interfered and passed an Act, by which all persons indicted for such offences were ordered to be tried in counties different from those in which the excesses were committed. In consequence, several of the

Steel Boys, against whom examinations had been taken, were carried to Dublin and put upon their trial. But so strong was the prejudice conceived against this breach of a fundamental law of the constitution, that no jury there would find any of them guilty.

Soon after, the obnoxious Act was repealed. Reflection now took place, and the pernicious consequence of the principles and conduct of the insurgents began to be viewed by the people in a just light. Once more, some of them were tried in their respective counties. Their indictments were proved, and they were condemned and executed. These examples, with proper exertions of the military, extinguished the commotion. But the cause from which it arose, and the fear of punishment operating strongly on the minds of many of the insurgents, and the influence of their example extending to their relations, to their friends and connections, produced effects that were permanent and highly prejudicial to the country. In a short time many thousand of its inhabitants emigrated to America.—*History of Ireland*, ii. 80.

## CHAPTER LXXX.

JAMES CROMBIE, D.D. (1770-1790),

MINISTER AT BELFAST (FIRST CONGREGATION).

1. An *Essay on Church Consecration*, containing a History of its Origin, Progress, and Effects ; in Answer to a Letter of a friend in the North, giving an account of a late Consecration Sermon. 12mo, pp. 70. *Dublin*, 1777. A. C. B.
2. A *Sermon on the Love of Country* ; preached before the First Company of Belfast Volunteers, on Sunday, the 19th of July, 1778. [Matt. xxiii. 37.] 12mo, pp. 39. *Belfast*, 1778. A. C. B.
3. The *Expedience and Utility of Volunteer Associations* for National Defence and Security, in the present critical situation of public affairs, considered in a Sermon preached before the United Companies of Belfast Volunteers, on Sunday, the first day of August, 1779. in the Old Dissenting Meeting-house. [1 Chron. xix. 13.] Pp. 32. *Belfast*, 1779. A. C. B.
4. The *Propriety of Setting apart a Portion of the Sabbath* for the purpose of acquiring the knowledge and use of arms in times of public danger illustrated. A Sermon preached before the Belfast Volunteer Company on Sunday, the 4th of March, 1781, in the Old Dissenting Meeting-house, and published at their request. [Mark ii. 27.] Pp. 39. *Belfast*, 1781. A. C. B.

DR. CROMBIE was an ordained minister in Scotland, whence he was called in 1770 to become assistant to the Rev. James Mackay in the Old Congregation of Belfast.

His first publication was his *Essay on Church Consecration*, published in 1777. It is an exceedingly able, clear, and conclusive performance, in which he shows the human origin of the practice, and points out its evil

effects. It has been republished at the end of the Newry edition of Towgood's *Dissent*.

During the Volunteer movement, which was so popular in Ulster, the clergy were expected, by sermons and addresses, to stimulate the courage of the new-fledged soldiery, and not a few of them sent to the press the discourses which were delivered on these occasions. Dr. Crombie preached and published no less than three of these discourses. The last of the three has gained some notoriety, owing to the questionable doctrine that it attempts to set forth. He maintained in that discourse that a definite portion of the Sabbath day might with propriety be devoted by the volunteers to drill and exercise, on the ground that this is a work of necessity and mercy, and that such works are sanctioned by the example of Christ. Most religious people would, however, differ with him here, and would fail to see in such military parade any necessity or mercy, at least so long as there is no enemy landed on our shores. This sermon gave just offence to pious minds, and called forth an answer from the Rev. Sinclair Kelburn, minister of the Third Congregation. It was productive also of serious mischief, for it threw a shield over the sinful practice, too common at all times, of those who absented themselves from public worship; and this practice was never more common than during the period of political folly which terminated in the Irish Rebellion.

In 1783 the Old Congregation was in rather a declining state; so much so that some advised a union with the Second Congregation, it being supposed at the time that one edifice was quite sufficient to accommodate all the New Light Presbyterians in Belfast. But Dr. Crombie with some courage decided against this faint-hearted policy, and rebuilt his church on a plan of more grandeur and beauty than before. In the building then erected, the First Congregation worships still. The Rev. John Wesley, who preached in it in June, 1789, says of it, "It is the completest place of public worship I have ever seen. It is of an oval form. . . . It is very

lofty, and has two rows of large windows, so that it is as light as our new chapel in London; and the rows of pillars, with every other part, are so finely proportioned that it is beautiful in the highest degree." The Earl of Bristol, then Bishop of Derry, who, whatever his eccentricities, was not illiberal towards other Churches, so much admired the new building on one occasion while passing through the town, that he sent to the treasurer of the congregation a donation of fifty pounds to aid in defraying the expense.

Dr. Crombie was appointed the first Principal of the Belfast Academy, an institution which was founded in 1786 on a scale commensurate at the time with the size of the town, for conferring upon young lads the advantages of a higher commercial and classical education. But he did not long survive to occupy that post. He died on the 1st of March, 1790.\*

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#### CONSECRATION OF BUILDINGS UNSANCTIONED BY CHRIST.

Between the Jews and the Samaritans there had long subsisted an obstinate contest. The one maintained that God should be worshipped on Mount Gerizim; the other, that He could be worshipped at Jerusalem only. Jesus in His conversation with the Samaritan woman thus resolves the case—"Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." As He equally declared against both places, do we find that He pointed out any other, either already consecrated or by His direction thereafter to be so? No, as to places, not a word. "The hour cometh," saith He, "when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Here is a plain declaration that under the Gospel the worship of God was to derive its value, not from the place of the worshipper, but from the temper of his mind. We cannot, therefore, but think that it would be infinitely better in the Church to inculcate this upon their hearers as the just idea of Divine worship, than to amuse them with a pompous rite which directly tends to create a persuasion that it derives its efficacy from the sanctity of places. Jesus represented the Father of the universe as everywhere present, and as ready to hear every worshipper

\* Rêd's MS. *Catalogue: Bible Christian* for January 1837: *Letter* of Rev. J. S. Porter in the *Northern Whig*, dated Belfast, December 1, 1873.



that worships Him in spirit and in truth; He fixed no limitations as to place or situation.

His practice was consistent with what He taught. In a great variety of places we find Him employed in acts of public worship; sometimes He assembled His hearers upon a mountain, sometimes by the seaside, sometimes in a ship, and often in private houses. On these occasions He performed acts of religious worship, but among these acts the rite of consecration is not to be found. Often He met with His audience in the Temple. Should it be alleged that this was consecrated to His hand, I add that much oftener He taught them in the synagogues, which were not consecrated. But did He supply this defect? Did He hallow these last for the purpose of sanctifying the worship He performed in them? Did He consecrate the house in which He instituted the sacrament of the Supper? Our Church, by way of eminence, calls this a great and an excellent mystery; then it might have been expected that Jesus would at least have consecrated the house in which it was to be celebrated. Yet we find that, great and excellent as this mystery was, the house in which He and the disciples met on this occasion was no more consecrated than the house in which I am now writing. If this rite was necessary or even decent, can we suppose that Jesus would have omitted it? Was He less concerned about the requisites of public worship than the bishops of our Church? We would be almost tempted to think this was their opinion; if it is not their opinion, on what do they found their rite? It is a perfect novelty compared with the practice of Jesus.—*Essay*, pp. 21, 22.

#### CHURCH CONSECRATION UNSANCTIONED BY THE APOSTLES.

Soon after the ascension of their Lord they were qualified, by the promised effusion of the Holy Ghost, for the full execution of that important trust committed to their charge. Both to Jews and Gentiles they preached in the name of Jesus, and, for the purpose of spreading His religion, they separated, took different roads, formed Christian societies, appointed teachers, and, as circumstances permitted, they revisited these infant seminaries of the Christian faith.

In the Acts of the Apostles we have an account of the places in which they assembled for public worship. Their first meeting was at Jerusalem in an upper room. Their next was probably in the same house. Then we are told that daily in the Temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Peter preached to a congregation in the house of Cornelius. At Thessalonica and Berea, Paul taught in the synagogues; at Corinth in the house of Justus, where he continued a year and six months; at Ephesus in the school of Tyrannus! At Troas he taught in an upper chamber; and for two whole years he preached, no man forbidding him, in his own hired

house at Rome; and in the same city he had a church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. These are among the principal places in which the Apostles assembled for the purpose of worship. Do we find that in all or in any of them they performed this consecration rite? . . . Judge for yourself whether anything is expressed or implied, in text or context, from which it can be inferred that they did consecrate the houses in which they worshipped. No; were you to accompany them through the whole of their travels, from the date of their commission to the expiration of their lives, you would find in their practice no rite similar to our modern consecration—nothing in name or in kind bearing the least affinity to it. And as they themselves observed no such rite, so they gave no instructions about it to these elders, presbyters, or bishops, whom they appointed to superintend the churches they had planted; not one word concerning this rite is to be found in the epistles they addressed to them. The thought . . . seems never to have occurred to them that it would tend to impress an audience with religious awe. On the contrary, they taught this could arise only from just sentiments of God impressed upon the soul. They never thought of borrowing assistance from consecrated walls and altars to excite devotion in their hearers. This their Master and they laboured to awaken by representing the great object of worship as a Spirit, and as pleased with that worship only which was offered to Him in spirit and in truth.—*Essay*, pp. 25–27.

#### ORIGIN OF CHURCH CONSECRATIONS.

The truth is, the consecration of Constantine's church at Jerusalem is the first thing of the kind that we meet with. . . .

The Emperor, by letters addressed to the bishops of almost every province, commanded their attendance at Jerusalem. Thither they repaired, accompanied with vast multitudes of people. They were directed to consecrate his church. They performed the service with a dexterity scarcely to be credited, if we consider that this was the first service of the kind in which they had ever been employed, and even the first Christian church that ever had been consecrated. They seem, however, to have been entirely acquainted with their respective parts. "Some prayed, some preached, some pronounced panegyric orations on the Emperor's magnificence, and some implored the favours of God by unbloody sacrifices and mystical sacred actions."\* . . .

But the question still recurs, whence did Constantine derive his ideas of church consecration? Not from the Gospel, as you must have already perceived, neither are we to suppose that it was a mere invention of his own.

The truth is, he was furnished with the idea and borrowed the

\* Eusebius. *De Vita Constant.*, iv. 45.

practice from the idolatrous customs of heathenism, the religion he lately professed. For it must indeed be allowed that consecrations did very universally obtain throughout the Pagan world. The Roman people seem to have been peculiarly fond of them; from the consecration of their first temple by Romulus to Jupiter Ferretrius, to this one performed by Constantine at Jerusalem, they continued the practice; and so much faith had they in the efficacy of the rite, that they consecrated almost everything; not only their temples and places of worship, but the sepulchres of their dead, and even the dead themselves. They extended the practice to their palaces, their senate-house, the walls of their cities, and even to private dwellings and public roads. There was something infinitely more generous in this proceeding of the heathen priesthood than is to be found in the modern practice, which confines all the benefit of this holy rite to churches and churchyards alone. If you have any curiosity to see a Pagan consecration, you will find an exceeding good one in the fourth book of Tacitus's History.—*Essay*, pp. 37-43.

## CHAPTER LXXXI.

ROBERT M'CLURE (1760-1823),

MINISTER AT ANAHILT.

*Moderation Explained and Recommended*; a Sermon delivered before the General Synod of Ulster on the 30th of June, 1779, being the second day of their meeting. 12mo, pp. 40. [Phil. iv. 5.] *Belfast*, 1779. A. C. B.

ROBERT M'CLURE was a native of the County Down, and was reared in the neighbourhood of Belfast. He inherited some property from his family. Tradition says that he was a man of commanding presence and very gentlemanly manners.

Mr. M'Clure was ordained as minister of Anahilt on the 29th of April, 1760. He married a daughter of Archdeacon Benson, rector of the parish of Hillsborough. He was a great favourite of the Marquis of Downshire of that day; so much so, that if he failed to appear at dinner at the Castle on a Wednesday afternoon, his Lordship was sure to call the next day to inquire what was the matter.

In 1779 he preached a sermon before the General Synod at Lurgan, on the second day of its meeting. The subject was *Moderation*. It is itself an illustration of the grace which it recommended. It is the very model of a moderate sermon; the evangelical spirit, judging from the sermon, appears to be extinct. The spirit of it is, take a charitable view of everything, no matter what reason you may have to think unfavourably of the opinions or practices of men. He was a

good man ; but even good men find it hard to rise above the circumstances by which they are surrounded.

Being Moderator of the Synod in 1779, it was his duty again to preach before the brethren at the annual meeting of 1780, which was held at Dungannon. He preached on that occasion from 1 Tim. iv. 16, but the sermon was not published.

He was so great a favourite with the Episcopal gentry and clergy in the neighbourhood of Hillsborough that he was pressed on more than one occasion to enter the Establishment, but he turned away from the subject by remarking pleasantly that "he was now too old to turn his coat."

Mr. M'Clure's ministry extended considerably over half a century, as he survived till 1823. He died on the 11th of May in that year. He was buried in the same grave with three of his predecessors—Messrs. M'Broom (1662–82), Seaton (1708–37), and Semple (see ch. lxxv.). In 1858 the congregation, with great good taste, repaired the tombstone over their graves, and marked it with a suitable inscription.

One of Mr. M'Clure's daughters married Dr. Wright, a medical practitioner in the neighbourhood, who afterwards studied divinity, and in 1802 became assistant and successor to her father. His youngest daughter married the Rev. Hugh Woods of Bangor. Arthur, a younger son, was an officer in the army serving under the late Duke of Kent, and when a very old man often told with pride how many a time he had lifted in his arms our present beloved sovereign Queen Victoria when she was a child. He retired to Anahilt in his last days, and was long a respected elder in that congregation.\*

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#### MODERATION.

By moderation we are either to understand that right government a man hath of himself in the regulation of his passions and

\* MS. *Minutes of Synod of Ulster* : M'Clure's *Synodical Sermon* . MS. *Letter of Rev. Thomas Greer of Anahilt*, dated June 2, 1875.



desires, so that his enjoyments do not exceed the importance of the objects about which they are concerned, and that nature and reason direct the degree of attachment to them ; or by moderation we are to understand that meek, calm, and candid temper of mind to be exercised towards others who may differ from us in opinion, judgment, or religious belief. It is in the latter sense I intend to treat the subject, and to illustrate and enforce the apostolic admonition in the text, " Let your moderation be known unto all men."

That mankind have originally different capacities for improvement, and that their application and researches after truth are as various as their different situations and opportunities, must appear obvious to every one. Hence must arise a difference in judgment and opinion, according to extent of capacity, diligence of inquiry, and various opportunities of improvement. If it is the unalienable right of human nature to judge and determine for itself, and if it is a right that every one assumes, and loudly complains of the violation of it from others, it would seem to follow that every one should allow the liberty to others that he claims to himself, and treat others with the same gentleness and humanity he wishes to be treated with himself. Every one wishes to meet with candour and kind allowances concerning his own sentiments ; tenderness where they possibly may be mistaken, and moderation where there may be uncertainty consistent with a good mind.

If the understandings of men are of different sizes, as we cannot doubt they are, and since it is the appointment of God they should be so, the consequence is they must have different apprehensions of things, according to the extent of their ideas and capacities. The observation hath been made ten thousand times that the minds of men differ as much as their faces ; nor do I suppose there are two men on the face of the earth who think alike in everything. And although the general complexion of human nature is the same, yet its features are diversified, and it appears in different degrees of beauty among mankind, yet none are so absurd as to injure another on account of his features, or to distress him for his particular complexion. And if variety and uniformity constitute beauty in the natural world, I know of no reason why they should be considered as any deformity in the moral ; and therefore it is a right founded in nature, a claim from the order of things and the present appointment of God, that we should exercise forbearance and moderation to one another.—*Moderation Explained*, pp. 5-7.

## CHAPTER LXXXII.

ROBERT SINCLAIR, M.A. (1755-1795),

MINISTER AT LARNE.

1. *Fortitude Explained and Recommended*; a Sermon preached before the Larne Volunteers, the 1st of August, 1779. [Phil. iv. 8.] *Belfast*, 1779.
2. *The Certainty of Death considered as a Motive to a Virtuous Life*; a Sermon delivered at Downpatrick, December 3, 1780, occasioned by the death of the Rev. William Nevin, late Pastor of the Protestant Dissenting Congregation in that place, and published at their desire. [Eccles. viii. 8.] 12mo, pp. 30. *Belfast*, 1781. A. C. B.

MR. SINCLAIR was a member of the old and respectable family of Sinclair, long connected with the congregation of Tubbermore, in the County Derry.

On the 24th of June, 1755, he was ordained as assistant to the Rev. Josias Clugston of Larne, over the old congregation in connection with the Presbytery of Antrim. For twenty years he was an assistant only; but he felt no want during that time, for he lived in Kilwaughter Castle, and acted as tutor to the son of William Agnew, Esq. The Agnew family was for many years identified with the Presbyterians of Larne, and delighted to lavish kindness on their ministers. When young Sinclair was first taken to visit at the house, the old squire said at parting, "Now, Mr. S., I hope you will not be a stranger at Kilwaughter." It proved to be the case; for twenty years he lived in the Castle, and the best horse in the stable was kept for his use.

In the Volunteer mania, which infected so strongly

every class of the population of Ulster, Mr. Sinclair did not escape. He wore the uniform, and being personally handsome, he was very much admired in that intensely political but feebly religious age. On one occasion when, at a meeting of the Volunteers on Ballygallyhill, the commanding officer failed to appear, the minister of Larne was chosen to review the troops, and discharged that duty in a most dignified and soldierly manner. In 1779 he preached and published a Volunteer sermon, containing a spirited address on the passage Phil. iv. 8.

Towards the end of 1780, Rev. W. Nevin of Downpatrick died, and Mr. Sinclair was called upon to preach his funeral sermon. This duty he performed, and subsequently published the discourse. It is the composition of a man who evidently was not an expert litterateur, but who knew how to express common sentiments in a plain and natural way. Like most ministers of his time, he is more moral than evangelical; but he does not broach any sceptical sentiment, so far as I have been able to observe.

It is not often that we are able to lift the curtain and present an old minister of the last century at his own fireside; but most fortunately we are able to do so in the words of a friend of the Rev. Classon Porter, one of the successors of Mr. Sinclair, to whom I am indebted for the following extract:—

“When I first knew,” says Mr. Porter’s friend, “Mr. Sinclair intimately, he was a fresh and venerable old man, with a white bushy wig, a good complexion, and noble aspect. His voice was sonorous, and pretty well educated. His manner in preaching was striking and impressive. In delineating character he was graphic, but rather more familiar than is now approved in pulpit oratory; though many turns of expression reminded you that you were listening to one who was conversant with the sages of Greece and Rome. His intimacy with the Latin classics gave a complexion, I conceive, to his way of thinking and speaking, and the sentiments which he imbibed from ‘the prince of Roman orators,’ as he loved to call his favourite Cicero, accorded well with the

high principles of civil and religious liberty of which he was a bold and strenuous advocate. At the period when I knew him, he did not enter much into society. When the late Mr. Jones Agnew came to the neighbourhood, he frequently entertained Mr. Sinclair at the Castle, and he was hilarious and extremely entertaining after the fillip which an evening from home gave him. He would sit in his parlour and amuse the little family circle with many a playful effusion, some sprinklings of ancient lore, or curious incidents, or diverting anecdotes; and when it would set off the narrative, he enlivened it by droll dramatic representations of the character produced. Most pleasant and instructive was it to hang on the lips of the garrulous old man. Methinks I see before me his little wife, for she reached but a little above his elbow, peering up at him with her black admiring eyes and devouring his discourse. He had a great fondness for music, and his favourite airs were such as were played by itinerant harpers, some of whom paid him occasional visits, and were most kindly treated."

Mr. Sinclair died on the 20th of February, 1795. Long afterwards old people were in the habit of telling that no funeral so large as his had been ever seen in that part of the country. His funeral sermon was preached by his co-presbyter, the Rev. William Bryson of Antrim.

He was interred in the same grave with his predecessor, Mr. Clugston, who died twenty years before him; and over their remains a stone was placed with the following Latin inscription, which was copied by Dr. Reid on the 9th of August, 1824, and renewed by Mr. Porter in 1858:—

"Hic jacent omnia quæ dissolvi potuerunt duorum virorum reverendorum, viz., Josiæ Clugston et Roberti Sinclair; quorum uterque coetus antiquioris Protestantium dissentientium apud Larne fuerat Minister: prior quinquaginta octo annos cum decesserit 80 annos natus, 10 die Augusti 1775: alter triginta novem annos, cum mortem obierit, 70 annos natus, 20 die Februarii, 1795. Hi amicitia conjuncti, literarum periti, sancti, humani,

religionem Christianam, doctrina et moribus, pieq : probeq : illustrarunt."

The "little wife" with the black peering eyes, that often looked up to her worthy husband with such admiring fondness, was Elizabeth Allen of Larne, who, after the death of her first husband, William Jackson, was married to Mr. Sinclair. By her he had two children, a son and daughter. Fanny, the daughter, married a Mr. Williamson; the son, John, did not conduct himself well, and finally emigrated to America.\*

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#### DEATH AN AWFUL EVENT.

The death of a fellow-mortal must give us the most striking and awful warning to prepare for our latter end. It must convince us that "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," is a sentence that still stands in all its original force. Abstractedly considered, death is a very awful event. To view the earthly house of our frail tabernacle dissolved by death—the beauteous structure of the human body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, converted into a heap of clay-cold ruins; to view the face that once blessed us with its smiles, pale and wan, the eyes that were full of vivacity and sprightliness for ever closed, and the lips, on whose accents we dwelt with such fond affection, for ever sealed up from us, is certainly a very awful spectacle. To bid an eternal adieu to this earthly theatre; to close our eyes for ever upon the sun that enlivened our day, and the moon and stars that softened the horrors of the night; to think of those bodies that were the companions of our pleasures and the instruments of our improvement committed to the silent and gloomy chamber of the grave, consigned to darkness and oblivion, is certainly very affecting. But death is the law of our nature, the common undistinguishing lot of frail humanity. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and those few days are full of trouble. He cometh up as a flower and is soon cut down: he fleeth as a shadow and continueth not."

How many amiable persons, some in the bud, others in the

\* The information contained in this article, and indeed nearly all I know of the ministers of Larne, Ballycarry, Cairncastle, and Glenarm, I have derived from a series of articles, written by the Rev. Classon Porter of Larne, which appeared in the *Christian Unitarian*, 1862-67. His fine literary and antiquarian tastes have made these sketches the very model of what congregational monographs ought to be.



bloom of life, are pierced by the unsparing shaft of death, whose promising genius, rising virtues, and warm affections were the boast, the delight of their parents and friends—whom we would gladly detain with us a little longer to be our companions amidst the sorrows and sufferings of this vain and transitory world—would willingly detain them, if our prayers and tears could detain them. But, oh ! Thou Supreme Ruler of the world ! Thou great Arbiter of life and death, Thy will be done ! Whatever happens under the direction of infinite wisdom and infinite goodness must upon the whole be fittest and best, though we perceive it not. But surely sentiments of resignation forbid not the feelings of humanity ! Blessed be God through Christ, the power of death only extends to our frail bodies ; it cannot hurt our everlasting interests, cannot stop our immortal spirits in the flight, and confine them in the grave to suffer one common extinction with our ashes. O grave ! where is now thy victory ? Thanks be to God, who hath given us Christians complete victory over death and the grave through our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Funeral Sermon for Nevin*, pp. 16-18.

## CHAPTER LXXXIII.

WILLIAM STEELE DICKSON, D.D. (1771—1815),

MINISTER AT BALLYHALBERT, PORTAFERRY, AND KEADY.

1. *A Sermon* on the Propriety and Advantages of Acquiring the Knowledge and Use of Arms in time of public danger. Preached before the Echlinville Volunteers on Sunday, March 28, 1779. [Neh. iv. 14.] Pp. 29. *Belfast*, 1779. A. C. B.
2. *Sermons* on the following subjects :—
  1. The Advantages of National Repentance. [2 Chron. vii. 14.] Ballyhalbert, December 13, 1776.
  2. The Ruinous Effects of Civil War. [2 Sam. ii. 26.] Fast at Ballyhalbert, February 27, 1778.
  3. The Coming of the Son of Man. [Luke xii. 40.] Sub-Synod Sermon at Belfast, November 4, 1777.
  4. The Hope of Meeting, Knowing, and Rejoicing with Virtuous Friends in a Future World. [1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.] 12mo, pp. 108. *Belfast* [1780]. A. C. B.
3. *Ye shall appear with Christ in glory*; a Sermon occasioned by the death of the Rev. James Armstrong, late Protestant Dissenting Minister of Portaferry. Preached at that place, November 14, 1779. [Col. iii. 4.] 12mo, pp. 40. *Belfast*, 1780. A. C. B.
4. *Psalmody*; an Address to the Presbyterian Congregations of the Synod of Ulster. 12mo, pp. 27. *Belfast*, 1792. M. C. D.
5. *Three Sermons* on the Subject of Scripture Politics. 8vo, pp. 69. *Belfast*, 1793. M. C. D.
6. *A Narrative* of the Confinement and Exile of W. S. Dickson, D.D., with an Appendix. 8vo, pp. 371 and 118. *Dublin*, 1812. M. C. D.

The Appendix contains the following :—

Synodical Sermon at Dungannon [John xviii. 26], preached 1781.

Sermon on Luke ii. 14, at Portaferry, December 25, 1792.

Sermon on 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17, at Portaferry, January 13, 1793.

7. *Speech at the Catholic Dinner, Dublin, May 9, 1811.* 8vo, pp. 24. M. C. D.
8. *Retractions; or a Review of, and a Reply to, a Pamphlet entitled "Substance of Two Speeches," by the Rev. Robert Black, D.D.* Pp. 95. *Belfast, 1813.* M. C. D.
9. *Sermons* [contains fifteen Discourses]. 8vo, pp. 399. *Belfast, 1817.* M. C. D.

WILLIAM STEELE DICKSON, one of the ablest and most unfortunate of the Presbyterian ministers of Ireland, was born in the neighbourhood of Templepatrick. He received his classical education from the Rev. Robert White (1755-72), the fifth minister in succession of that congregation. He studied at Glasgow under Dr. Adam Smith. The great philosopher did not, however, influence his future life nearly so much as two less celebrated men, John Millar, Professor of Civil Law, and Principal Leechman. From the former he derived his political principles; from the latter his New Light theology.

In March, 1767, Mr. Dickson was licensed to preach the Gospel. During his career as a probationer he made the acquaintance of Alexander Stewart, Esq., grandfather of the celebrated Lord Castlereagh—a family with which it was his destiny to come into collision through the most stirring period of his life.

On the 6th of March, 1771, he was ordained as minister of Ballyhalbert, now Glaslough, in the barony of Ards, in County Down, and in the same year, as he informs us, "became an husband and a farmer." After a few years spent in the quiet avocations of the pastorate, he brought himself into notice by preaching upon the sin and impolicy of the American war, then progressing in the New England Colonies, and by his advanced politics drew upon himself the suspicions of the whole district, which of course sympathised with Government and regarded the Colonists as rebels. Most people would now say that Mr. Dickson was quite right in principle; but it is hard to see that a man whose mission was to preach the Gospel to the rustics of the Ards had much to do with the American war, and it is

quite certain that by his public pronouncements on the question he did no good to the Americans, and deeply injured himself.

In the Volunteer movement, which originated in 1778, Mr. Dickson, like many other ministers, was quite an enthusiast. In his Volunteer Sermon, preached in 1779 and subsequently published, he gave voice to his military and patriotic ardour. It is an eloquent address, breathing the spirit of a patriot and a soldier, but deficient, in common with all the military sermons of the period, in the *sal evangelical*. In this sermon he reprobated in strong terms the injustice with which the Roman Catholics were treated, and pointed out the impolicy and danger of refusing to allow them to enter the volunteer ranks in defence of the country. This increased the odium with which he was regarded by the narrow-minded and exclusive classes of the district where he lived. Before, he was regarded as a traitor for sympathising with the Americans; now, he was regarded as no better than a Papist, simply because he considered that an act of simple justice should be done to his fellow-countrymen. This sage conclusion was to some minds strongly confirmed, when it oozed out that *the maiden name of the mother of the parish priest happened to be Dickson!* The inference was clear to them—the parish priest and the Presbyterian minister must be blood relations. His friends insisted that he should publish the sermon, but even they stipulated for “a modification of the part respecting the admission of Catholics to the Volunteer ranks.” To the latter part of the request he submitted very reluctantly, and to this circumstance it is owing that the printed passage in regard to the Roman Catholics is not by any means so strongly expressed as that in the original discourse.

An eloquent and clever funeral sermon which he preached at Portaferry on the 14th of November, 1779, on the occasion of the death of their minister, the Rev. James Armstrong (1739–76), led to Mr. Dickson's receiving a call from that ancient and respectable con-

gregation. He resigned Ballyhalbert on the 1st February, 1780, and six weeks afterwards was installed at Portaferry. His removal from a country charge to an important town congregation in his own neighbourhood, proved, at least, that whatever odium he had incurred among the privileged classes by his public declarations, his political sentiments had in no way impaired his popularity among the Presbyterian people.

In the year that he removed to Portaferry, he published a small volume containing four sermons, of which two were the fast-day sermons at Ballyhalbert that touched on the American war, and that elicited so much comment at the time. If a sermon is known to embody an unpleasant sentiment, none are so vehement in their denunciation of the discourse as those who did not hear it; the reason being that the sentiment announced spreads, and rumour intensifies it as it spreads, while all the modifying circumstances that originally softened its force drop from the memory and are buried out of sight. Did we not know this, we might now feel some surprise that the public utterances, of which we give a specimen in our extracts, could have called down odium on their author less than a century ago. Now from a thousand cities and villages over the empire the press daily speaks upon public questions with a thousandfold more trenchant keenness, and yet the peace of the country is not disturbed, and no one will remember to-morrow what is said to-day. The strength and safety of a Government is to allow every public question, which does not affect the very existence of the constitution, to be ventilated, and discussed freely.

Another treatise of Mr. Dickson, published before his troubles, is his pamphlet on *Psalmody*, which was printed in 1792. In this little work he shows the Divine authority for church music, and the means taken for its improvement in Old Testament times and at the Reformation period in the Reformed Church; laments how little it is cultivated by congregations in modern times; urges the people to acquire a knowledge of it,



and answers the vulgar objections against all improvements. It is clearly and ably written.

In his *Scripture Politics* he shows that Christianity does not originate in worldly policy; that it does not affect the pomp and the wealth, which flatter the vanity and gratify the ambition of men; it disclaims the idea of being attended by violence or supported by oppression; and that it exercises no dominion over men but what truth and righteousness fully justify. He shows also the nature of the peace which the Gospel was intended to introduce, and points out the causes which hitherto have prevented its establishment and extension. In the third of these discourses, he points out that religion should have influence over Governments and nations; that it is the duty of Christian teachers to expose and censure the oppression and tyranny of rulers; that this duty extends not only to acts of individual kings, but to those of combinations of rulers for evil purposes; and that prophets were sent to reprove evils and to prevent national ruin, owing to the indolence of a worthless priesthood, and the meanness and folly of a silly people. In this work he pleads strongly in favour of Roman Catholic emancipation.

But the spirit of the minister of Portaferry was too intensely political to enable him to rest content with the grave and quiet pursuit of sermons and psalmody. In the great County Down election of 1782, when the two houses of Hill and Stewart first came into collision, he used his best efforts for the return of Colonel Stewart, subsequently first Earl of Londonderry, and the father of Lord Castlereagh, and spent in the service of the country against the court no small quantity of his time, his labour, and his money. In after times he did not hesitate to say that Lord Castlereagh not only turned his back on the popular principles which his family then represented, but forgot his father's friend.

However this may be, Dickson to the last proved true to the political principles with which he started—the principles of parliamentary reform, and of the immediate and total emancipation of the Roman

Catholics. He became a member of the Society of United Irishmen, which, originally formed with the design of promoting parliamentary reform by advancing unity and brotherhood among all sects and denominations, was tempted in an evil hour to engage in less innocent methods, and to give its enemies the very opportunity which they desired, by taking up arms against the Government. When the rebellion was on the eve of breaking out, Dr. Dickson was arrested in Ballynahinch on the 5th of June, 1798, on the suspicion that he was a leader of the rebel army; he was taken into Belfast, sent aboard a prison ship, where he was detained for ten months, and treated with great harshness; he was afterwards sent along with others to Fort George, in the North of Scotland, where he was confined until the movement in Ireland had been completely suppressed, and order throughout the country had been fully restored. He was not liberated till January, 1802.

The effects of this long imprisonment on Dr. Dickson's worldly prospects were simply ruinous. His congregation in his absence was declared vacant, by authority of Synod, on the 28th of November, 1799. His income of £270 per annum was destroyed, and the only means of support left was a small property of the annual value of £25. His successor at Portaferry, the Rev. William Moreland, whom he describes as "a young man of taste, learning, and unblemished character," generously offered, upon his liberation, to resign in his favour, but he, with the manly spirit which always distinguished him, refused to allow it.\* The best thing he could have done in the circumstances would have been to remove to that hospitable land beyond the sea, where several of his brethren, who suffered in the calamities of the time, had already gone; but he cherished a sensitive dread that his removal would be attributed to fear, and interpreted as an acknowledgment of guilt. For these reasons he decided to remain. The second congregation of Keady, formed in 1802,

\* *Narrative*, p. 259.

invited him to become their pastor in the following year. He accepted the call, but Government ungenerously refused to grant him the usual allowance of *Regium Donum*, and the congregation was too weak to afford him an adequate support independent of the wretched pittance of bounty, which was entirely under the control of Dr. Black and Lord Castlereagh. Under these circumstances he continued to maintain a poor and miserable existence.

That Dr. Dickson as a politician was guilty of anything worse than public spirit, patriotism, and folly, has never been proved. That he sympathised in the objects of the United Irishmen, and was a member of their society, he never denied. That he attended some of their meetings is certain. That he would have taken part in the rising had he not been arrested before it took place, is probable. That he himself said that he was an adjutant-general for County Down was sworn to by various Government spies and informers, when Dickson was in prison, and when he had no opportunity to cross-examine and confront them. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that he was never brought to trial. No overt act of rebellion was ever proved against him. He was not taken with arms in his hands. No opportunity was given him to advance rebutting evidence, to cross-examine, or even to hear the testimony of those who swore against him in secret committees and before partisan magistrates, of which the Rev. John Cleland, the celebrated "Squire Firebrand," the friend of "Billy Bluff," was the most conspicuous. No proof of his being an adjutant-general in the army about to be raised was ever given, even by informers, except their allegation that he told them so himself. If we now believe the statement to be true, our reason for doing so is that he did not explicitly deny it; and if true, it would have been more ingenuous in him to have frankly owned it. But certainly nothing was ever established against Dr. Dickson which would convict him now in any court of justice, and therefore we must think that, like so many others at that time, his own

folly left him at the mercy of unscrupulous and unprincipled men, who, for their advantage, seized the opportunity to ruin a clever man whom they hated and feared, and whose guilt was strongly suspected without their being able to establish it by legal proof.

For the troubles that shadowed the latter part of his life, Dr. Dickson cast the entire blame on Dr. Black of Derry, the friend of Lord Castlereagh, and at the time the leader of the Synod of Ulster. He blamed Dr. Black mainly for the minute entered on the records of the Synod at its meeting in Lurgan in 1799, which states, in reference to the rebellion of 1798, "That of the comparatively small number (of its members and probationers) *who have been implicated in treasonable or seditious practices*, two only, one a minister, the other a probationer, have been executed; *two are still in confinement*; some have expressed their sincere contrition; others are no longer connected with the Synod, and the remainder have either voluntarily or by permission of Government removed from the kingdom." Dr. Dickson was one of the two ministers who were in confinement, and he complained that his brethren, under the leadership of Dr. Black, entered this statement on their books, when he had never been brought to trial, and when no crime had been ever proved against him, except what might be involved in his saying that he was the holder of a commission in the rebel army. He also found fault with Dr. Black and Dr. Black's brother-in-law, Mr. Cumming of Armagh, for using their influence to prevent his being called to the congregation of Keady; and he alleged, that, after his obtaining that appointment, Dr. Black's interest with Government barred him from the privilege of receiving the usual endowment.

This feeling led to the publication of his *Narrative* in 1812, which gives a full detail of his personal history, and of his connection with the rebellion—an autobiography that will ever be valuable as giving a graphic history of public affairs in the North of Ireland in the closing years of the eighteenth century. This

celebrated quarrel came up before the Synod of 1812, on which occasion Dr. Black delivered two speeches, the *substance* of which was afterwards printed as a pamphlet. In these speeches he undertakes ostensibly to defend the Synod, but in reality himself, from the charges of Dr. Dickson. Of course, Dr. Black, with a majority of the Synod in his favour, carried everything his own way, and Dickson was called upon to retract. He responded to this call by the publication of his *Retractions* the following year, in which, instead of retracting, he reiterated his former charges, and sought to fasten the entire blame on his antagonist. The latter did not respond, and so the matter was at last allowed to rest.

In 1815 Dr. Dickson, unable to maintain himself any longer at Keady on his limited resources, was obliged to resign. A publication of a volume of sermons in 1817 did not, it is to be feared, improve his pecuniary position. His last years were spent in Belfast, and he died in poverty on the 27th of December, 1824. His great antagonist, Dr. Black, had seven years previously succumbed to a still more melancholy fate. Neither of the two was exactly such a man as a minister of Christ should be. Black was a courtly divine, a man of the world, a worshipper of rank and power; Dickson was a politician and a demagogue, in whose view the Church of Christ and the interests of religion seem to have occupied only a secondary place.

The following account of the closing years of Dr. Dickson is from the graphic pen of Dr. Montgomery :—

“Finally, oppressed with age and sorrow, he was obliged to retire from the ministry, and for several years he enjoyed the gratuitous shelter of an humble roof in the suburbs of Belfast, through the liberality of the late Joseph Wright, a member of the Established Church. There, after being sustained by a weekly allowance contributed by the late Dr. Stephenson, William Tennant, Francis M’Cracken, John Barnett, Dr. Tennent, Dr. Drennan, Adam M’Clean, and a few others, this good and amiable man, ‘majestic though in ruins,’ closed his earthly pilgrimage. From the year 1780 until the year 1798 he was a courted and an honoured guest in the most splendid mansions of Belfast, where alternately his patriotic wisdom commanded acquiescence, and his sparkling wit ‘set the table in a roar :’ yet, without one stain upon his



character, I saw the earthly remains of that great man, even in the same town of Belfast, deposited in a pauper's grave, where not even a stone marks 'the narrow house of his repose.' Some eight or ten individuals formed the entire funeral procession. The late warm-hearted W. D. H. M'Ewen pronounced a pathetic oration ; and we left the melancholy spot moralising on the value of public gratitude, the permanency of political friendships, and the value of popular applause."

There is a moral in all this which we need not stop to point out, and which the thoughtful reader will not miss.\*

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#### DEATH.

Death is ever on the wing. His alarms continually ring in our ears, and the sound is fatal to every mortal tie. To-day, perhaps, he is satisfied with one of the many who compose our circle of acquaintance ; but to-morrow he presses forward and robs us of a friend, and the day following he presses closer still—breaks nature's strictest ties, and forces off the honoured parent under whose indulgent smile we rose to manhood, the faithful companion of our souls whom we singled from the world to sweetly share life's cares and comforts, or the darling child upon whose rising strength we fondly hoped to repose the burthen of declining age, and leaves us here to mourn till a surer hope pours in her balmy treasures, sweetens affliction's bitter cup, and lifts the soul to heaven.—*Funeral Sermon for Armstrong*, p. 33.

#### DESIGN OF MUSIC IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Nor is the end of singing *merely* to express the sentiments of devotion, but by expressing to enliven and strengthen them where they are, and to call them forth where their sacred influence was unfelt before. In fact, as poetry is the language of the heart, music is its voice, and conveys sentiments as naturally as words convey thoughts. Every sentiment, affection, and passion has a tone of voice peculiar to itself, and this tone is so distinct that we never misunderstand it. Even where words are wanting, we never mistake the shriek of terror for the shout of triumph, the soft breathings of love for the burst of anger, or hope's fond flattering accents for the trembling voice of fear. Of every other sentiment or passion the tone is equally distinct and expressive. And experience clearly teaches that the same tone which expresses a passion where it is, tends to excite it in others, and as by infection to diffuse it far and wide. How often have we seen a

\* Dickson's *Narrative and Retractions*: MS. *Minutes of Synod*: Thomson's *Abstract*: Black's *Substance*; *Irish Unitarian Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 333.

multitude struck motionless with fear by a shriek of terror, where the person and occasion were both unknown ! How often have we been oppressed with irresistible seriousness, relaxed into mirth, melted into tears, or elated into joy, by sounds alone ! Now singing is only the continued articulate modulation of these sounds. Hence a bold combination of musical sounds inspires even the timorous with courage ; a sprightly air rouses the melancholic into cheerfulness, and a plaintive strain softens the heart into tenderness, and steals a tear from the eye. This we know to be fact. Let us apply it, then, to the case before us. If music were adapted, in the same manner, to the sentiments of devotion, and practised with equal judgment and taste, can we suppose its influence would be less powerful and affecting ? No, certainly. If, therefore, to excite and diffuse the sentiments of devotion be the end of singing in the worship of God, and if its influence, in this case, be the same as in every other, the plea brought against us must fall to the ground.—*Psalmody*, p. 16.

#### THE WAR WITH THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

From all these things taken together, it appears that in whatever point of view we consider the present civil war, we have cause to reprobate it. If we consider it as trampling humanity under foot and violating the ties of blood, it is unnatural and barbarous ; and if we consider it as dissolving the bonds of Protestantism, wounding the interests of Britain through the sides of America, or exposing us to the inroads of a jealous enemy, it is foolish, impolitic, and wicked. Can we, therefore, hesitate what were best and safest to be done ? Is not the way of peace in all respects to be preferred ? And while faction roars for blood and upstart loyalty beats to arms, doth not every real friend to his country look forward with earnest desire to the happy day when the sword shall cease to devour ? Is it not the first prayer of his heart that the wisdom of Britain may yet stretch forth the peaceful olive to the Western world, and the second that she may not stretch it forth in vain ?

Yet such is the rage of ambition, that even this measure, for which humanity, religion, policy, and precedent jointly plead, is loudly declaimed against as humiliating and dishonourable, and many circumstances of guilt are alleged against the Colonists to justify the continuance of war in order to reduce them. "Prerogative has been infringed, allegiance withdrawn, the omnipotence of Parliament insulted, and an independent state erected in contempt of its authority." Now let all this be granted, without raking up provocations, injuries, or anything which may tend to irritate, and what will be the consequence ? Though these offences are great, are we to sacrifice our all to a point of honour ? Or, to use a favourite mode of expression, does authority require that a parent should risk his own perdition in an attempt to

chastise the ingratitude of a child, when experience shows that he is unequal to the task? Surely no. Such pleas for war are lighter than dust in the balance when opposed to the weighty considerations which call for peace.

While peace is thus the object of our desire, we must receive a peculiar satisfaction from a review of the conduct of Irish Presbyterians on this trying occasion. Our enemies, if any such we have, can scarcely deny that as a body we have been guided by the spirit of moderation. We have neither attempted to clog the wheels of Government by frantic opposition, nor to encourage measures of violence by sanguinary addresses. If we have in any instance censured the principle or conduct of the war, our censures have been justified by the general feelings of humanity and a zealous interest for the common concern of Britain and America. And should necessity call us forth to oppose the jealous enemies of our liberties and religion,\* we are ready to approve ourselves the steady friends of the Constitution and the rights of our country.—*Four Sermons*: Sermon ii, pp. 55-57.

#### ROMAN CATHOLIC GRIEVANCES.

The circumstances of this degradation render it as odious as it is intolerable. These are marked, not only with cruelty and injustice, but national perfidy. By the treaty of Limerick, on the faith of which the Roman Catholics of Ireland submitted to King William in 1691, they were to be secured in the enjoyment of rights and privileges therein specified or alluded to. This treaty was signed by His Majesty's commander of the army and the Lords Justices of Ireland, confirmed by the King and Queen under the Great Seal of England, solemnly ratified afterwards by an Act of Parliament, and continued inviolate for thirty-six years. During this period they enjoyed the privileges and exercised the rights guaranteed to them, those of serving on juries and voting for members of Parliament not excepted. Nor did they incur the slightest imputation of disloyalty or disaffection to Government from their bitterest enemies, though alarms of invasion were repeatedly spread, and a neighbouring nation convulsed by rebellion.

Yet in the year 1727, without fault or provocation on their part, the Parliament chosen by them in common with their Protestant brethren stripped them of every power and privilege of freemen, and, in particular, left them incapable of joining in the election of another. Under all the incapacities which this and succeeding Parliaments created, they continued till within these few years; and even now the greatest and most opprobrious lie upon them.

\* [He means the French, who, it was feared, might invade Ireland while England was engaged in the American war.]

Yet still it is remarkable that during these sixty-five years of worse than Egyptian slavery, in which insult and ignominy have frequently added to oppression, they have never forfeited, by act or declaration, their character of unshaken loyalty to their King and respectful obedience to Government—that very Government which reduced them to slavery, poverty, and wretchedness, and out-transubstantiating transubstantiation, continues to convert their flesh into bread and their blood into wine for communicants in iniquity. Nay, though rebellion again raised her head in a sister kingdom during that period, and we have had repeated wars with the nation to whose humanity they owe what their hearts hold dearest, they have fought the battles of their country against her, both by sea and land. And on a late occasion, when the kingdom was robbed of the defence for which it liberally paid, for a purpose which policy disclaimed, humanity reprobated, and Heaven had defeated, when the fleets of that nation rode triumphant on our coasts, and Government declared that protection rested with ourselves, instead of resentment or cold indifference, they caught the patriotic flame which animated the kingdom, and gave birth to an army of citizen soldiers unequalled in the records of the world. And though ye, in the hour of your darkness, rejected them from your ranks, be it known unto you that in the other parts of the kingdom they formed an important part of that illustrious body who generously stood forward for the defence of their brethren, who received the united and well-earned thanks of King, Lords, and Commons for the salvation of their country, and who shall live in the grateful remembrance of posterity and admiration of the world in spite of pithless proclamations, till the angel of God shall proclaim, “Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.” Nay, at this very moment . . . they are humbly supplicating a reversal of the stern decree, and praying from man a restoration of the rights which they received from God.—*Scripture Politics*, pp. 66, 67.

#### THE YOUTH OF LORD CASTLEREAGH.

During some years after this, little occupied the public mind or employed the public tongue except volunteering and volunteers. The system was now become universal, with a very few exceptions. Many gentlemen of landed property, who at first opposed, or barely tolerated, the measure, and even some who seemed to dread the armament of the people as much as they detested American independence, or, horrorstruck, anticipated a French debarkation, assumed the uniform of their country; some, as was supposed, merely to keep their tenantry under their own control, and others because volunteering was become fashionable.

Be this as it may, in the year 1782 Ulster was so completely armed, that at a review in Belfast the number of patriotic soldiers was deemed little inferior to that of the spectators capable of

bearing arms. In a sham fight on the day after this review, Robert Stewart, now Lord Viscount Castlereagh, then only in his thirteenth year, commanded the light infantry of the Ards Independents, of which his father was colonel. His company consisted mostly of boys a few years older than himself. Their appearance attracted universal notice, and excited the most pleasing emotions, as it promised a succession of patriot soldiers under whose banners Ireland would recline in safety. The conduct of young Stewart did more. The manner in which he conducted his boyish band through the variegated and long-protracted engagement, displayed such germs of spirit and judgment as excited admiration, extorted applause, and laid the foundation of that popularity which he afterwards obtained.

One circumstance of which I was a witness had a most powerful effect on the public feeling. The sham fight was a representation of an approach to and attack on the town of Belfast. The Ards Independents, commanded by Colonel Stewart, now Earl of Londonderry, formed the van of the invading army. By them the advanced guard of the defenders of their country was completely defeated. In their flight they left a small party with one piece of cannon, on a rising ground, to cover their retreat. To drive in this party and take possession of the cannon, the younger Robert and his boyish band were despatched, and the affair was so conducted on both sides that some officers who were present declared that it bore the strongest resemblance to real action. That a great majority of our youthful heroes believed it to be such, I am fully convinced. When the defendants gave way and abandoned their gun, young Stewart rushed forward in the ardour of his soul, grasped it in his arms, then mounted its carriage, waved his cap, and with tears of triumph huzzaed to the main body, and called them to come on.

The circumstance had a most powerful effect on the then ardent mind of the multitude present, and their account of it excited high expectations of and a warm attachment to the rising Robert through the whole country. From that day many began to look forward to and speak of him as their future representative. "If such be the boy, what may we not expect from the man!" was to be heard in almost every company; and I own that my own expectations were as extravagant, and my attachment as enthusiastic, as those of any other man living.—*Narrative*, pp. 12-14.

#### THE PRISONERS AT FORT GEORGE.

As some may read this *Narrative* to whom we, or most of us twenty, are totally unknown, and who may wish to know who and whence we were, and of what description, this place may be as proper as any other for the gratification of their curiosity. With a view to this, as I have already inserted our names, I have



only to add that we were selected from the three provinces of Ulster, Leinster, and Munster, but principally from the city of Dublin and town of Belfast; that we comprehended in our body three magistrates, three barristers, two physicians, one attorney, one apothecary, one printer and bookseller, one printer and proprietor of a newspaper, one dentist, one military captain, one runner to a bank, one merchant tailor, one Presbyterian minister, with an eminent porter brewer, two wholesale merchants, one broker, and two young gentlemen without profession, trade, or calling.

. . . To the professional part I should have added "a clergyman of the Established Church," as Arthur O'Connor was ordained as such previous to his being called to the bar; and as episcopal ordination impresses an indelible character, he not only then was, and now is, but ever must be, a clergyman. Of our circumstances I shall only say that we had all been independent—most of us respectable—in our professions, some possessed of large capitals in trade, and others of considerable landed property. Perhaps it may not be amiss to mention here that, as we were selected from the three principal provinces of Ireland, we were respectively members of the three principal Churches in the kingdom, and which alone Government has yet acknowledged as Churches. Nor is it unworthy of notice that the number of Catholics, Protestants, and Presbyterians in our little colony was in an inverse ratio of the number of each denomination in Ireland at large. Perhaps the proportion may be stated as follows, though not correctly:—

Catholics (two-thirds of the people),	prisoners,	. . .	4
Presbyterians (more than one-fifth),	do.,	. . .	6
Protestants (less than one-seventh),	do.,	. . .	10

From this statement, a fact truly anomalous, two presumptions arise: 1st. As a majority of the prisoners were deemed principal authors and promoters of the Irish insurrection, and as only one-fifth of said prisoners were Catholics, the representation of that insurrection as a *Popish* rebellion cannot be confided in as the very truth. 2d. That the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, however pre-eminent in splendid titles, lucrative offices, and overwhelming power, has as little pre-eminence to boast of in loyalty as in numbers, *where loyalty is left to provide for itself*. . . .

The Irish insurrection was firmly believed in Scotland to be a real Popish rebellion. One of the gentlemen who knew that Messrs. Tennent and Simms were Presbyterians, and having learned that I was a minister of that persuasion, in a low voice expressed his surprise that *we* would connect ourselves with Papists, and much more that we would be concerned in a Popish rebellion. Overhearing this, I interfered, and asked the gentleman in a voice equally low, "Why he called the insurrection in Ireland a Popish rebellion?" He answered pertly, that "he did

so on the authority of the Government, and that it was known to be a fact." I replied that "such an assertion was one of the many falsehoods by which the people of Britain were deceived and misled in respect to Ireland." As this seemed to offend him, I then asked him what opinion he supposed the Irish Government to entertain of us twenty then present. To this he answered, rather peevishly, but without reserve, that "they must consider us as the most guilty or the most dangerous, or they would not have distinguished us as they had done." On this, with a view to remove an idea equally unfounded and pernicious, I withdrew to a rude table, and wrote our names, classed by our religious profession, as underneath :—

John Sweetman, John Swiney, Dr. Mc'Nevin, Joseph Cormick,	Catholics.	Wm. Tennent,	Presbyterians.	T. A. Emmet,	Protestants of the Es- tablished Church of Ireland.
		Robt. Simms,		R. O'Connor,	
		Samuel Neilson,		A. O'Connor,	
		George Cumming,		John Chambers,	
		Joseph Cuthbert,		Mat. Dowling,	
		Dr. Dickson,		Thomas Russell,	
				Edward Hudson,	
				Hugh Wilson,	
				Wm. Dowdale,	
				Robert Hunter,	

—*Narrative*, pp. 110–116.

#### QUARREL WITH DR. BLACK.

That the Catholic question assumed an appearance of great interest in 1810 is very true ; and that it always possessed a real intrinsic interest, equally great, is not less true. It is a question in which not only Irish Catholics, but every individual of the human kind, even the Anti-Catholic petitioner, has an equal interest—a question "of so great dignity and such paramount importance," that the "ablest statesman" and "minor adventurers" do equal honour to themselves, and justice to their common nature, by "attaching themselves to the Catholics, and facilitating the attainment of the object of their pursuit."

That I am a *minor* adventurer in their cause, though not as a hawker or auctioneer of mere professions, I proudly acknowledge—that I am only a minor in abilities, I deeply regret. But that my attachment and minor exertions commenced in 1810, I do not acknowledge. I had the honour to embark in the cause four years before Dr. Black first distinguished himself in 1782, at the memorable meeting in Dungannon, by a speech that excited the admiration and commanded the esteem of the most enlightened and liberal minds in Ireland, and particularly of her Volunteer patriots—the only protectors of her coasts, the guardians of her rights and of Britain's safety : and what proved more useful to the Doctor, it procured him the ardent friendship of Robert Moore (the Doctor must remember him), the notice of the Earl of Bristol, and through them the pastorship of the congregation

of Londonderry. In my minor attempts to promote the Catholic claims, I was so animated by the zeal of imitating, not emulating, the Doctor, that I have hitherto persevered in my puny efforts, and all I regret is that I was so far his inferior in abilities. In 1792, when the Doctor's zeal fell below ebullient heat, my heart retained its animating glow, my tongue continued to prate, and my pen to scribble, at the hazard of my liberty and of my life. I even prostituted my pulpit to "scripture politics," not by three, but by ten times three sermons, during that and the succeeding year. In the last of the three sermons, published under the "quaint and irreverent" title of *Scripture Politics*, I pledged myself to "stand erect and firm as an iron pillar or wall of brass to declare the truths of the Bible and enforce my people's duty, while God shall vouchsafe me understanding to know, a heart to feel, and a tongue to express them." That pledge I have not yet forfeited. To preserve it safe, I have hitherto acted with uniformity, under various and threatening discouragements; and so long as I live I shall continue to exert all the powers with which God in His goodness shall continue to favour me for the same purpose.—*Retractions*, pp. 51, 52.

## CHAPTER LXXXIV.

SINCLARE KELBURN, B.A. (1780—1802),

MINISTER AT BELFAST.

1. *The Morality of the Sabbath Defended*; a Sermon preached in the Third Meeting-house, Belfast. [Mark ii. 27.] Pp. 42. *Belfast*, 1781. A. C. B.
2. *Duty of Preaching the Gospel* Explained and Recommended; an Ordination Sermon at Newtownards. [2 Tim. iv. 2.] Pp. 36. *Dublin*, 1790. A. C. B.
3. *The Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ* Asserted and Proved, and the connection of this Doctrine with Practical Religion pointed out in Five Sermons. 8vo, pp. 127. *Belfast*, 1792. A. C. B. [Reprint of 1821, pp. 102. *Belfast*. M. C. D.]

MR. SINCLARE KELBURN was ordained minister of the Third Congregation of Belfast (now Rosemary Street, on the 8th February, 1780.

He was quite a young minister when he was called upon to vindicate the morality of the Sabbath, in opposition to his neighbour, Dr. Crombie, who, in a published discourse, had defended and recommended the practice of the Volunteers meeting upon that day for the practice of drill. In a sermon on Mark ii. 27, preached to the Third Congregation and subsequently published, Mr. Kelburn set forth with considerable force the usual arguments in favour of the Sabbath being a moral law and not a ritual institution.

Though he stood forth as the advocate of the Sabbath, Mr. Kelburn was himself warmly interested in the Volunteer movement. It has been told of him that, "on the occasion of a military riot, when the Volunteers beat to arms, he mounted the pulpit dressed in full uniform as a private in a Volunteer corps, and, while preaching,

rested his musket against the pulpit-door. The discourse, delivered under such circumstances, was, we can well believe, very energetic; and as the Christian soldier enforced his patriotic exhortations by appropriate action and gesticulation, not only did the preacher's own musket rattle, but his armed audience characteristically expressed their approbation by striking the butts of their muskets on the meeting-house floor.\*

The next publication of Mr. Kelburn was a sermon on 2 Tim. iv. 2, which he preached at the ordination of the Rev. James Simpson in Newtownards, and which was published in 1790. It is a very excellent evangelical discourse.

The most important of his theological productions is his *Five Sermons on the Divinity of Christ*, originally published in 1792, but reprinted in 1821. They produce the usual arguments on that doctrine, and are regarded by those who have read them as both able and convincing.

He was a man of strong political sympathies. When the insurrection of 1798 broke out, he was arrested during the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and was imprisoned in Kilmainham. During his long imprisonment he lost the use of both his limbs, and did not long survive his liberation. He resigned his congregation on the first Tuesday of November, 1799, and died on the 31st of March, 1802.

Little of his personal or family history is now known. I find it stated that his cousin, William Kelburn, was an eminent engraver and artist in London, who was employed in drawing and engraving the plants for Curtis's *Flora Londinensis*.†

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#### REPLY TO DR. CROMBIE ON THE SABBATH.

With regard to setting apart or appropriating a portion of the Sabbath day for the purpose of learning the use of arms, I think it very improper, for the following reasons:—*First*, a sufficient portion of time may be spared from our usual employ-

\* *Christian Unitarian*, vol. iii. p. 272.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. cii. p. 222.



ments without any difficulty. No man, surely, will pretend to say that the pittance proposed to be devoted to this employment on the Sabbath could not be spared out of the six days ; nor can it be supposed that the Volunteers are so confined to labour, or so straitened in their circumstances, that they cannot attend on week days. If they are, it were better such had never undertaken the task, or that their place had been supplied by others, than that the Lord's Day should be so profaned. Any superior exactness in exercise or manœuvres, which may be required in such a space of time, cannot be very considerable : nor can we agree with our author in asserting that the end justifies the means ; for if the end which we propose to obtain is good, and the means are so likewise, then we act right ; but let the end be ever so desirable, valuable, or good, it can never justify evil means used to obtain it. It is in no case lawful to do evil that good may come of it ; for the action is evil in the first instance, and we are not so sure that the good we expect will follow as that the action itself is evil. In a word, if the means we use to obtain a lawful end are intrinsically good, they are just ; but if not, the end will never justify them. But is it not a very great temptation to multitudes to neglect their duty (which extends much further than to the time of public worship) when they see men parading in arms and performing their evolutions ? The multitude, always curious, will be then called out to see a gay sight, and many before they return home will have forgotten the religious instructions of the day. Supposing that it is not so great a crime to be thus employed as in many other ways, yet this is no defence, though it is the most that many can urge. Our author has hit upon a wonderful expedient to render attendance upon public worship more fashionable. I have a very contemptible opinion of a *fashionable* attendance upon public worship. One religious devout worshipper is more acceptable in the sight of God than ten thousand fashionable attenders. Though I respect the Volunteers, yet I do not think their exercising on the Sabbath will bring this "neglected day into deserved estimation," even though they should attend upon public worship. Such a change must be the work of God, giving us more grace and hearts better disposed to His service.—*Morality of the Sabbath*, pp. 38-40.

#### PRACTICAL USE OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S DEITY.

The doctrine of Christ's Divinity is either true or false ; if it be true, as it certainly is, then we must believe it, and exercise our faith and hope accordingly ; that is, we must believe in Jesus, we must trust in Him, and love and serve Him, in the obedience of faith ; yea, we must honour Him as we honour the Father. But if Christ is not God, then we must not believe in Him, nor trust in Him, nor worship Him, nor pray to Him, nor honour Him as we honour the Father. This makes a great

difference in practical religion, in faith and practice. Principles are intimately connected with practice ; yea, religious principle is religious practice, in several instances, where no outward act of religion is exercised. . . .

The doctrine we have been defending is no speculative doctrine ; it contains principles intimately connected with the religion of the heart, which is practical religion. And these principles are also connected with the outward acts of religion, if inward religion and the outward exercises of devotion and worship are, or ought, to be connected. If this doctrine be false, they that believe it to be true, and, in consequence of this persuasion, address one prayer to Christ, or sing His praises, or exercise towards Him any act of religious worship, are idolaters ; and of consequence the Apostles were idolaters, and the saints and angels are idolaters, or the Scriptures are not the Word of God, nor given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But if the doctrine be true, what are they that reject it, and will not give glory to the Son of God, the glory due unto His holy name ? What are they that will not acknowledge the Son of God as their Lord and their God ? They are unbelievers and children of disobedience.

Again, to show the connection of this doctrine with practical religion, we observe that it is intimately connected with an act of practical religion, namely, our drawing nigh to God through a Mediator, by whom we have access to a reconciled God and Father. If the doctrine of Christ's Divinity is not true, then there is no access to God, no way of drawing nigh to God, no opportunity to exercise this religious duty ; for if Christ is not the Redeemer, the Mediator, the way, the truth, and the life, then there is no Redeemer, no Mediator, no access to the Father ; for no man, saith the Scripture, cometh to the Father but by Him. Now if there is no access by Him, then there is no access at all. But if Christ is not that Redeemer, that Mediator which the Scripture declares Him to be, then He is not the Mediator by whom we should have access to the Father. That is, if He does not answer the exact account and description given of Him as the Mediator by whom we have access to God, then the access to God is not by Him, but perhaps by another. However, we know that there is but one Christ, one Mediator, one Redeemer, and if Jesus Christ is not this Redeemer, then all our hope in Him is lost and perished. Christ Jesus is not the Redeemer spoken of in Scripture, if He is not God manifest in flesh. He is not the Redeemer if he is not the "Maker," the "Husband of His Church," the "Holy One of Israel," the "Lord of Hosts," the "God of the whole earth." He is both God and man, who mediates between God and man : the Mediator must be able to lay his hands upon both parties, and reconcile them to each other. I mention this to show that if we give up the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, we give up our hope of salvation by Jesus Christ.—*Divinity, Sermon v.*, pp. 110–113.

## CHAPTER LXXXV.

JOHN ROGERS, M.A. (1767—1814),

MINISTER AT CAHANS, COUNTY MONAGHAN.

1. *A Historical Dialogue*. 1781.
2. *Dialogues between Students* at the College ; which contain a Defence of the leading Doctrines of Christianity ; also showing their tendency to promote Holiness ; interspersed with philosophical observations. 12mo, pp. 104. *Monaghan*, 1787. A. C. B.
3. *The Substance of a Speech* delivered in a Synod at Cookstown, July 8, 1808, being a Vindication of the Co-ordinate Constitution and Formula of the Associate Synod of Ireland ; also containing a brief History of the first Presbyterian Ministers in Ireland after the Reformation, and proving that the General Synod of Ulster never was subject to the Review or Control of the National Assembly of Scotland ; to which are subjoined arguments to prove that a certain local and specified matter of doubtful disputation ought not to be a term of ministerial or Christian communion. With an Appendix. 12mo, pp. 47. *Dublin*, 1809. A. C. B.
4. *Sermons*.

JOHN ROGERS was born about 1740. He was ordained on the 3d of June, 1767, at Cahans, in County Monaghan, as successor to Dr. Clark (see ch. lxiv.).

In 1781 he published his *Historical Dialogue*, in which, says Dr. Killen, "he discusses, in a very agreeable style, several theological subjects then much agitated, and, among the rest, the doctrine of the Reformed Presbytery regarding the civil magistrate."

In 1782 he attended the Volunteer meeting at Dunganannon, and was one of the two persons present who disapproved of the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities, and in this respect dissented from the decision of the meeting.

He published his *Dialogues between Students* in 1787. This pamphlet contains, in proportion to its size, a large amount of sound theology. One cannot read this production, and the works of his predecessor, Dr. Clark, without feeling the importance of having such men settled in Ulster at a time when many ministers of the General Synod were sadly deficient in evangelical spirit. In the preface he speaks of the importance of having a home education provided for candidates for the ministry—an idea which, after several failures, was eventually realised by the opening of the Belfast Institution as a collegiate institution in 1815.

In 1796 Mr. Rogers was appointed as Professor of Divinity for the Irish Burgher Synod. He did not leave his country charge, but the young men who waited on his prelections met him at his church and lodged in the surrounding farmhouses. Some most excellent ministers received in this way their theological training and afterwards did credit to the ability and learning of their instructor.

Early in the present century there was an attempt to unite into one the two branches of the Secession Church in Ireland. The attempt proved a failure, owing to the fact that the Antiburgher body, being a dependent branch of the Antiburgher Synod in Scotland, could conclude nothing without the sanction of the Synod of which it was a part. The Burgher Synod in Ireland was already independent of the parent Church. The two bodies in Ireland were not, therefore, co-ordinate, and were not in a position to treat on equal terms. Mr. Rogers, in a speech delivered before his own Synod, met at Cookstown in 1808, pointed out the causes of the failure, and showed by able and conclusive argument "that a Presbytery or Synod in one kingdom ought not to be subject to the review or control of a Synod in another kingdom." In the end, all came to see that he was quite right in the position that he took up, and his able demonstration had no small effect in guiding all parties to a sound conclusion. Its main value now is that it stereotypes the state of feeling

which existed in the Burgher Synod at the time, and contains various interesting historical references, some of which are embodied in the extract. "I remember a time," says he, "when there was not a Seceder minister of any description in Ireland, and therefore can inform this house of things which no man, from his own observation, will be able to tell them in a few years hence."

Mr. Rogers died on the 24th of August, 1814. The Synod, of which he was the leading member, entered on their books a record, of which the following is an extract :—

"Although he did not startle and astonish his hearers with the novelty, terror, or thunder of his discourses, their evangelical matter, the perspicuity of their arrangement, and the plainness, piety, and simplicity of their illustrations, delivered in a natural, flowing, and impressive style, rendered him universally acceptable as a preacher. He was Clerk of our Synod from the time it was constituted till his decease, and in that capacity was admired for his diligence and fidelity, and for the ardent and unremitting interest which he took in everything connected with its prosperity. He occupied a still higher station in our body; he was our Professor of Divinity during a period of eighteen years, and always enjoyed the confidence of his brethren for the soundness of his judgment and his love of the truth, and was venerated and loved by the students. He was an honour to us also as a man and a member of civil society. He was a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate. His virtues attracted the notice of some of the higher classes, and he was distinguished with various expressions of their esteem. He was honoured through life, was useful, as he often prayed himself, until his dying day, and after a long life . . . was universally lamented at his death."\*

The venerable James Rogers of Glascar is the grandson of this excellent minister.

\* *Minutes of Presbyterian Synod of Ireland*, 1829, p. 42.



## PREACHING CHRIST.

*Thomas.* I understand your first mark of a sound minister—that he will not only speak *to* the heart, but *of* the heart, and point out the wickedness of it. But what do you mean by the second mark—“That he exalts the Saviour”? Must he always preach about the sufferings of Christ, and neglect other important truths delivered in the Holy Bible?

*John.* I mean that he should not “shun to declare the whole counsel of God:” let his subject be what it will, that he should improve it in such a manner as to exalt Christ and lead sinners to Him as the only Saviour. To preach truths, the greatest truths, in a detached manner, without pointing out their connection with the person of Christ, is to act like a painter who can draw a hand or a foot, but could not finish the picture of a man. For however beautiful the hand or foot may be, they lose their beauty and usefulness if they are not connected with the head and heart, the seat of life; so let this or that truth be of ever so great importance, they lose in a great measure their usefulness and beauty if they be not viewed in connection with Christ. The scheme of salvation is a chain of blessings, of which election is the first and glorification the last link, of which every one is connected with the person and offices of Christ our Mediator. We are chosen in Him, united to Him, saved by Him; and are blessed in Him, in whom the nations are blessed.

*Thomas.* Your observations may be true; but, if you please, give me a few instances of some truths that may at first sight appear to have no connection with Christ, and show that they have; and then I may understand what you mean.

*John.* Your request I most cheerfully grant. Suppose that a minister enlarges upon the spiritual extent of the Divine law, and asserts that no man can perfectly fulfil its precepts nor satisfy its threatenings, and therefore that he falls under its curse. Most alarming truth, in a detached view! unless he tells us that “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse,” that “He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,” and thus “the law is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.” If he shows that we are polluted, guilty, diseased, weak, ignorant, &c., he will also discover Christ as a fountain, righteousness, physician, strength, and wisdom to free us from all these evils. A Gospel minister will set forth Christ as the Scriptures represent Him, viz., to be the centre of every truth and the sum of every ordinance. For without Him, the best composition and most graceful delivery is but as “a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.” He will point out the righteousness of Christ as the meritorious cause of every saving blessing, and the love of God and union to Christ as the source of every grace by which we are qualified for serving God acceptably, and for bearing the cross courageously. On the other hand, an unsound minister or an ignorant one, unacquainted with

the scheme of salvation, may preach upon the mortality of the body, the immortality and immateriality of the soul, future rewards and punishments, in a dry manner, without leading guilty sinners to the great atonement. Sometimes, indeed, at sacrament seasons, he may give you a tragical account of the bodily sufferings of Jesus, and in glowing colours paint the cruelty of the Jews, the treachery of Judas, and the cowardice of Peter; but not one word of His soul's sufferings, the wrath of God which He bore for us. He may acknowledge that Christ died for us—that is, for our good; and yet will not acknowledge that He died for us—that is, in our law-room. He will not declare that many who acknowledge Christ to be the Messiah, and yet do not receive and rest on Him alone for salvation, are worse than the Jews who crucified Him, for they did not believe that He was the promised seed.

*Thomas.* What are the reasons that ministers preach in such an insipid manner, and do not endeavour to lead sinners to Christ, or to preach the fundamental truths of the Gospel?

*John.* There may be many reasons; the most obvious are, they are either ignorant of the truth or have not experienced its power.—*Dialogues*, pp. 22, 23.

#### THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

*Saul.* First prove that God made a covenant with Adam; there is no account of this covenant in Genesis.

*Paul.* If the mind of any person is delivered in a concise manner in one part of a writing, yet if it is more fully expressed in another part of the same writing, by comparing one part with another we perfectly discover his mind. In like manner let us read the Scriptures: "All Scripture is given by Divine inspiration," Hosea vi. 7. God, speaking of Israel, says: "But they like men (in the original, Adam) have transgressed the covenant." In Romans and in Galatians you have the two covenant heads, Adam and Christ, contrasted. The disobedience of the former as the cause of our misery, and the obedience of the latter as the cause of our happiness, are declared, Rom. v. 17-19. There are but two covenants, of which the covenant of works is one and the covenant of grace the other, mentioned in Galatians; the covenant of works represented by Hagar's seed, the covenant of grace by Sarai's seed: the one from Sinai, which gendereth to bondage; the other from Jerusalem, which is above, and bringeth freedom, Gal. iv. 22-28. It is also evident that God made a covenant with Adam, because children, who do not sin after the similitude of Adam, are exposed to the wages of sin—death. If children had no original sin, they would not be subjected to such dreadful diseases in infancy, as they never committed actual sin.

*Saul.* I do not deny that our death is a consequent of Adam's eating the forbidden fruit. God said to him, "In the day thou

eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But is it, therefore, incumbent on me to grant that a covenant was made with Adam because all men must die?

*Paul.* I will not now consider what was included in the threatening. I might show that it included in it death in its utmost extent—death spiritual, temporal, and eternal. From your concession that death is an effect of Adam's fall, I may fairly deduce this inference, that God made a covenant with Adam as the representative of his posterity. For if there were not a covenant, how could death in justice be inflicted upon his offspring? Death is the wages of sin, and wherever death is inflicted, in all reason we must conclude that the subjects of it are in some respect sinners. To deny this would be to accuse the Almighty of injustice; for by His justice He is bound to defend the innocent as well as to punish the guilty. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

*Saul.* Do not beasts daily die? Are they the subjects of sin?

*Paul.* The irrational creatures were formed for man's use; for Adam had dominion over the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and the beasts of the field. Their death proves God's displeasure against man. He now shows that He is displeased with the whole creation, which travaileth in pain to be delivered from its bondage to sinful man. God, therefore, by the death of useful cattle, shows His hatred at man's sin, and the beasts by death are delivered from slavery. I humbly submit whether I have not proved that God made a covenant with Adam; because the Scripture declares it, and children, who are not guilty of Adam's sin, have the effects of Adam's sin inflicted. I now proceed to prove that Adam agreed to that covenant. You must acknowledge that God made Adam upright, that he was holy and free from sin. I would only ask, Is not holiness God's moral image? If Adam, therefore, was holy, he could not withhold his consent. No party with whom God enters into covenant can be at liberty to refuse His terms or to propose terms to Him, as in covenants between equals of mankind. God, from the purity of His nature, can propose no terms but what are equitable, and consequently a pure and holy creature could not, yea, would not, object to reasonable terms.—*Dialogues*, pp. 34-36.

#### FORMATION OF THE BURGHIER SYNOD OF IRELAND.

In May 1779, Mr. Main of the Presbytery of Down, and Mr. Quinn of the Presbytery of Monaghan, went to the Synod in Scotland, and presented a petition from the three Presbyteries to obtain their consent that we might constitute ourselves into a Synod. The three Presbyteries sent me over the September following, and we got their consent. Their consent to what? Was it to constitute us? No, no; they pretended to no such

supremacy. They and we did not agree that they should be called the General Associate Synod, and condense the kingdom of Ireland into a province, and call us the Provincial Synod of Ireland, to extend their bounds. But they consented that we should be a sister Synod of equal authority, the one not being subject to the review or control of the other, and to hold occasional communion with one another, which we do by the mutual exchange of minutes every year. Four of their ministers since our erection have come to our Synod; and we appointed two to visit them, of whom one attended their Synod. We ourselves appointed the time and place of our first meeting, and our Scotch Father\* to constitute us, which he did at Monaghan, October 20, 1779.

Oh! but that was a joyful day to all our ministers and to all our congregations, and to none more joyful than to our Scotch Father. Upon that day he saw, no doubt, the answer of many prayers, and he certainly saw the accomplishment of a prediction which he confidently uttered before a large assembly above twenty years before, of which I was informed by different eye and ear witnesses. The matter of fact is as follows. He came over to Ireland after the Rebellion in Scotland. It could not be long, for the Rebellion was in '45, and he was ordained in 1749. Of the many devices to nip Secession in the bud, this was one, viz., to represent the Seceders as rebels. A scurrilous paper to this purport was dropt at Ballybay new erection, where he was preaching, which was handed to him. He took notice of it in the evening, and told the large assembly "that he hoped to live, in spite of men and devils, to see a Presbytery and a Synod in Ireland." He lived near twenty-five years after the erection of this Synod. When I reminded him of it the evening of the constitution of this Synod, by asking him did he remember what he said in William M'Kinley's field? "I do," said he, "and it is remarkable that the first Presbytery of ours was constituted in that field." There also the three first ministers were ordained by the Presbytery of Glasgow, and upon the evening of Doctor Clark's ordination the Presbytery of Down was constituted. If my brethren of Down Presbytery have lost the minute of their constitution by the lapse of time or change of clerks, I can show them the field where they were first constituted on July 23, 1751.—*Speech*, pp. 13, 14.

#### HOW SECTS ORIGINATE.

I have no suspicion of any brother in this Synod, but I fear on some future day that some speculative eccentric genius may creep in unawares, who might endeavour to lead men off from the sim-

\* The Rev. Thomas Mayn, who was minister of Ballyroney (1749-1806), and grandfather of the late Rev. Thomas Mayn Reid, senior Clerk of the General Assembly.

plicity of the Gospel, under the specious pretext of going on to perfection. There never was an error broached but was introduced by some one man, eminent for the appearance of sanctity, and under the pretext of going on to perfection. And when he had formed a party, they endeavoured to introduce their innovations into the common creed. Hence arose the different sects in the Church. If every whim that comes into the head of a speculative self-conceited man must be published and imposed upon others, farewell then to all good order, peace, and unanimity in the Church. It is a contemptible supremacy to be at the head of a faction to break the peace of the Church.

If such a man creep in, reason calmly with him, for harsh treatment may confirm him in his error. Repeat two or three texts to him, such as "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself," and do not break the peace of the Church. Do as Jacob did, who drove the strong cattle no faster than the weak could follow. Tell him how Christ taught His people "as they could bear it;" that you are weak and he is strong, and that "the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please themselves." Tell that man when he arises, for I fear that such will arise, that improvements cannot be made in religion as in arts and sciences, for religion doth not depend upon experiments, but upon the Word of God, and that men will not be easily induced to believe that God never fulfilled the promise of leading His Church into all truth, according to the Scripture, until he arose. Tell such a man that, in your humble opinion, going on to perfection does not consist in finding out new truths, but the knowing of old truths more clearly, believing them more firmly, loving them more heartily, contending for them more zealously, and living more holily. Give him four instances of great discoveries which God manifested to eminent saints; to Moses, John the Baptist, the three disciples upon the Mount of Transfiguration, and to Stephen at his death. And all these revelations did not consist in discovering to them any new truth of which they had been totally ignorant, but the confirmation of old truths which they had believed, and which they had taught; viz., to Moses, that God was the Lord God, merciful, &c.; to the others, that Jesus is the Son of God, the very truth that Stephen was sealing with his blood. He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Tell him that to change our formula might expose him to the ridicule of the world—that is comparatively a small matter, but how would his heart bear the bleating of the sheep? It is not an easy matter to alter old constitutions. When Peter the Great saw the smooth chins of the clergy in England, when he went home to Russia he would willingly have given orders to cut off the long beards of his half-savage priests; he durst not attempt it. One of his successors thought he might do it: he paid dearly for it.—*Speech*, pp. 25, 26.



## THE FATHERS OF THE SECESSION.

These men would not slide through their text like oil upon polished marble, and perhaps make as little impression, as Dr. Watts says of haranguing preachers. They would not pass over the least particle in their text without explaining it. They would make an *as* and a corresponding *so* subservient to show the connection between privilege and duty, or between one doctrine and another. It would not satisfy them to pick out what men call now the principal idea, and not explain the very terms of the text. No, sir ; they would explain the principal idea, and make the collateral truths in the text support that idea. They might not prattle about the three great unities of time, place, and action, like cox-combical pedants, but they knew a far better unity, the *analogy of faith*. This brings to my recollection a sermon which I heard delivered by an Arminian preacher, who seemed afraid to read the whole verse, which was John vi. 37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me," &c. ; he only read, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out ;" and in a legal harangue showed that Christ would receive a sincere, returning, repenting sinner. But our common Fathers could bring motives from the doctrines in the text, which Arminians deny, to encourage sinners to come to Christ, viz., His unchangeable love. He would not only receive them when by constraining grace they came, but He "would in no wise cast them out." They would make the Father's gift, the certainty and secretness of election, strong motives. What induces a carnal man to throw his money into a lottery ? Two things : he knows there is a prize, and he doth not know who will get it, and therefore he hopes he may, and uses the means to obtain it. In like manner (but for a better end) our common Fathers would inform their hearers that some men will certainly be saved ; here is a certainty for men that is not for fallen angels ; and, sinner, "you do not know but you may be saved ; use the means and leave the event to God."—*Speech*, p. 33.

## CHAPTER LXXXVI.

WILLIAM BRYSON (1765—1815),

MINISTER AT ANTRIM.

1. *The Practice of Righteousness* productive of happiness both at present and for ever ; a Sermon preached at Crumlin, July 28, 1782, on occasion of the death of the Rev. Thomas Crawford. [Isaiah xxxii. 17.] Pp. 29. *Belfast*, 1782. A. C. B.
2. *The Duty of Searching the Scriptures* recommended and explained ; a Sermon preached at the Ordination of the Rev. Futt Marshall in Ballyclare, February 9, 1785. 8vo, pp. 40. *Belfast*, 1786. C. P. L.
3. *Funeral Sermon* for Rev. Robert Sinclair of Larne. 1795.

THE REV. WILLIAM BRYSON succeeded Dr. Campbell as minister of the old congregation of Antrim, in connection with the Presbytery of Antrim.

His first published work was a funeral sermon for the Rev. Thomas Crawford of Crumlin, preached on the 28th July, 1782, from Isaiah xxxii. 17. His object in the discourse is to describe "the happiness, both present and future, arising from the practice of moral goodness." A specimen of this sermon, bearing on the character of a man whose name and family have been so long connected with the Presbyterian Church in Ulster, is attached to this notice.

His ordination sermon at Ballyclare, on 9th February, 1785, is one in which Mr. Bryson comes out with some advanced opinions. His subject is John v. 39. He undertakes to give directions how to read the Scriptures, and arguments to induce men to study them. Almost the whole discourse is taken up with elucidat-

ing the first of these heads. Human reason he takes to be the guide. Scripture is to be studied, but its doctrines are not to be received any farther than they commend themselves to human reason. On this ground he rejects this and the other doctrine, not only transubstantiation, but also reprobation, the imputation of Adam's sin, and the righteousness of Christ. He speaks of the prejudices of those who think that we are not to recommend ourselves to Divine favour by our works, and that we become righteous through Christ's righteousness without any moral goodness of our own; and he thinks also that our involuntary errors will not be imputed to us. This is quite enough to show that, however eloquent in enforcing the study of the Scriptures upon others, he himself had not studied them to much advantage. Into one sermon he contrives to draw nearly all the errors, which were held by his party at the time. Its radical defect is, that the author fails to see what is the province of reason and what is the province of revelation. He imagines that human reason is to sit in judgment on the contents of the Word of God!

His funeral sermon for Sinclair of Larnie, preached in 1795, has not come into my hands.

After a ministry of fifty years at Antrim, during which he sustained an unimpeachable moral character, Mr. Bryson died on the 6th of May, 1815. His funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Bruce of Belfast.

His wife died before him. He left three sons and two daughters. A grandson in Australia was surviving some years ago (1872), and at that time was his only living descendant.

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#### CHARACTER OF CRAWFORD OF CRUMLIN.

The Rev. Thomas Crawford sprung from a stock of respectable and pious ancestors. His father was Dissenting minister of Carnmoney, and was held in much esteem by his people. [His grandfather by the father's side was minister of Donegore in this county. His grandfather by the mother's side was minister of Urney in the County of Donegal. His great-grandfather was

minister of Portaferry in the County of Down. Thus he has left to his offspring a long list of venerable ancestors, whose virtues did honour to themselves while they lived, and whose example, now that they are dead, should have great influence with their descendants.\*] His mother was a woman of uncommon understanding, discretion, and goodness. Under the care and inspection of these parents, he was trained up to knowledge and virtue. He received a liberal education, which he finished by attending the Colleges of Glasgow and Edinburgh. He afterwards went through a course of trials and examination before the Presbytery, and was licensed to preach the Gospel. His character and his performances soon recommended him to the favourable notice of the public. The people of Carnmoney were desirous that he should assist his father during the old man's life, and that upon the event of his death he should succeed him as their minister. About the same time he received invitations from two vacant congregations, Island-Magee and Crumlin, to accept the pastoral care of them. He accepted of the call from hence, was ordained to the charge at the latter end of the year 1723, or the beginning of 1724, and resided here above fifty-eight years.

Mr. Crawford possessed natural abilities much above the common rate. He was endowed with a brilliant imagination and exquisite sensibility, which led him to form lively conceptions, and to express them in a forcible and affecting manner. These principles, however, were not left without control; they were under the control of good judgment and elegant taste. Hence his public discourses were well calculated to entertain, to instruct, and to edify his hearers. . . .

The important objects of religion, morals, learning, and the duties of his sacred function, almost entirely engrossed his mind, and ordinarily diverted his attention from matters of temporal interest. He passed through this world like a stranger, unwilling to be inveigled by the affairs of a foreign country which he visits. His conversation was in heaven; he considered himself as the destined citizen of it; his views, thoughts, and desires were directed towards it; and by imitating the inhabitants of the world above in their noble studies and exercises, he endeavoured to prepare himself for becoming their immediate and intimate associate. He was not solicitous about what he should eat, or what he should drink, or wherewithal he should be clothed; but, in conformity to the instructions of his Divine Master, he sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, resting assured that all these things should be added unto him. He had moderate desires in regard to worldly possessions and enjoyments, was satisfied with the lot assigned him, and received the gifts of Heaven with affectionate gratitude. He felt in his own breast, and he studied to infuse into his family, a temper of pious cheer-

\* The sentences within brackets are in a note in the original. I have taken the liberty of transferring them to the text.—T. W.

fulness and contentment, which is preferable to the most ample fortune and the most superfluous fare.—*Funeral Sermon for Rev. Thomas Crawford*, pp. 18-27.

#### WHY WE SHOULD STUDY THE SCRIPTURES.

We all, in words at least, acknowledge the Bible to be a rule of faith and practice, and we would be highly offended if any one called our belief of it in question. We are fully assured that it is the Word of God, and that upon our observance of it depends our everlasting happiness. We, therefore, upon our own principles, are inexcusable if we neglect the most diligent examination of it. Did we believe that there were a book prescribing infallible rules for securing long life, health, and prosperity on earth, we would inquire after it with the utmost avidity, read it with the most serious attention, and study to become fully acquainted with its instructions. We would cautiously guard against every conceivable danger of misinterpreting it, use the greatest diligence to arrive at its true meaning, and never rest satisfied till we had the best possible assurance that we understood it. But a happy eternity is infinitely superior in value to the longest and most pleasing life that can be obtained here. The most robust body, however cherished and skilfully managed, must within a few days give way to the decays of nature, and be for ever excluded from all the enjoyments of this world. But eternal life shall never come to an end. When the sun, moon, and stars are extinguished, and this globe of earth like the baseless fabric of a vision is dissolved, leaving scarce one wreck behind; when numberless millions of years are elapsed, eternal life will be as far from a period as at the moment when it first commenced. The heirs of eternal life, instead of suffering any decay, shall be exempt from all infirmity and pain and sorrow, and shall advance in perfection, in bliss, and glory throughout their endless duration. With what earnest application of mind, then, should we search the Scriptures, in which we are persuaded that the rules for obtaining eternal life are laid down! How grossly stupid and insensible to our own highest interest are we, if we indulge in voluntary ignorance of the sacred books! How unspeakably foolish is it to be diverted from the study of them by the business and pleasures of this world!—*Ordination Sermon*, pp. 37-39.



## CHAPTER LXXXVII.

JOHN THOMSON, JUNIOR (1767—1828),

MINISTER AT CARNMONEY.

1. *To Preach Christ the Distinguishing Characteristic of a Minister of the Gospel*; a Sermon preached at the opening of the General Synod in Lurgan, 24th of June, 1788. [An unpublished MS.] W. M. D.
2. *Abstract of the Laws and Rules* of the General Synod of Ulster from June 15, 1694, to June, 1800, extracted and now published by order of Synod. Pp. 68. *Dublin*, 1803. T. W.

JOHN THOMSON, jun., succeeded his namesake and uncle, the Rev. John Thomson (1731–1765), the sixth minister of Carnmoney. He was ordained there on the 10th of March, 1767.

He proved to be at once a popular preacher and laborious minister, as shown by the fact that in 1771 he received a unanimous call from the congregation of Donaghadee, to which at first he seemed rather favourable, but which in the end he saw it his duty to decline.

In November, 1776, he married Jane, eldest daughter of the Rev. William Laird, of Rosemary Street, Belfast, and grand-daughter of Rev. Francis Laird, of Donoughmore, in the County Donegal.

In 1787 the Synod of Ulster conferred on him the highest honour in its power to bestow. In retiring from office the year following, he preached an excellent Gospel sermon, which, unfortunately, was not published, but which I have been privileged to peruse in manuscript.

It sustains fully his character as an able and evangelical minister, and makes good his title to rank with the M'Dowells, the Elders, and the Hannas—men who, long before the Arian controversy commenced, stood bravely up for orthodoxy in the cold and cloudy day.

In 1790 he was appointed by the Synod of Ulster to examine their official records from 1697 down, and to have an abstract drawn out of all the laws, acts, and regulations passed in the intervening years, especially such as were of a general nature, and to have them arranged in chronological order. In 1793 the *Abstract* in manuscript was ready, and a committee of Synod, consisting of Dr. Dickson and Messrs. Kelburn, Bankhead, and M'Clure, was appointed to revise it. The political movement that followed soon after seems to have delayed the project, so that it was not till ten years later that the *Abstract* appeared in print. Some antiquated regulations of the Synod, passed in 1700, ordering ministers to "study decency and gravity in their apparel and wigs, avoiding powderings, vain cravats, half-shirts, and the like," were retained by Mr. Thomson, which gave occasion to no small amount of wit at Mr. T.'s expense—most undeservedly indeed, seeing that he transcribed merely what he found in the minutes, and all that was retained had the approval of the Synodical Committee. The Synod, however, felt very grateful for this service, which made their official regulations for the first time accessible to all; and they gave Mr. Thomson, what he well deserved for his work, their unanimous thanks, and ordered six hundred copies of the *Abstract* to be printed at their own expense. The value of the *Abstract* is of course diminished, since our ecclesiastical rules and regulations have been codified and embodied in the *Book of Discipline*; but till the manuscript minutes of Synod are printed *verbatim*, it will still be valuable for containing so much of their spirit and language. Consisting as it does simply of extracts from the minutes of Synod, it is unnecessary to append a specimen.

The character of Mr. Thomson as a rigid disciplina-

rian and an orthodox theologian is thus touched upon in a satirical poem published anonymously in 1817:—

“Sage patentee for wielding plumb and line  
To square the moss-clad walls of discipline !  
O seek not thus with sternness to prolong  
The Gothic gloom which former ages flung,  
To sour our manners and our taste bedim,  
Nor let us e’en *our shirts with ruffles trim* :  
At home thou gently doff’st thy wig and rod,  
And wouldst thou prove a cynic here abroad ?” \*

Mr. Thomson died on the 23d of March, 1828. By none was his character better described than by Dr. Cooke in the Synod at Cookstown in that year:—

“He was emphatically the father of the Synod ; and throughout a long life of usefulness he fully sustained the high character of a Presbyterian minister. He was in every sense of the term a model of what a clergyman ought to be, venerable for his age and distinguished for charity, while he showed himself an unshaken asserter of orthodox principles. His opinion was regarded with parental deference, and his correct views constituted a kind of Synodical dictionary, to which a final appeal was universally made. Though his integrity was unbending, he possessed that urbanity of disposition which rendered him adverse to measures of severity wherever amendment was within the limits of hope. In the world his conversation was such as to embellish the ministerial character, and to shed a lustre over the name of Presbyterianism. The Synod of Ulster occupied a principal share of his attention till his last hour, and even at that critical moment, when usually the brightest intellects undergo a temporary obscuration, his mighty mind did not forsake him. He exhibited the character of a dying Christian. His experience was that of a man who could say, ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory.’ Long will it be before the Synod of Ulster numbers among its members one so variously distinguished. Rich in Christian expe-

\* *The Ulster Synod*, a satirical poem, 1817.

rience, ripe in the full fruition of a Saviour's love, he set like a summer's sun, with all his glories around him." \*

Mr. Thomson was father of Charles Thomson, Esq., who took such an active part in establishing Fisherwick Place congregation, and grandfather of the late Rev. William M'Clure, and of Sir Thomas M'Clure, M.P. for County Londonderry (1879).†

#### ON PREACHING CHRIST.

It certainly must imply that Christ Jesus is the principal subject of our sermons ; to speak of Him only occasionally is utterly insufficient. In preaching Christ we must unfold and illustrate the great and important doctrines of Scripture which immediately relate to Him. The person and offices of our glorious Redeemer must be displayed that men may have clear views and exalted conceptions of the Divine Saviour, and of the way of reconciliation through Him. We ought to remind our hearers that He who came to save sinners is the only-begotten Son of God ; that He is "the image of the Invisible God," the "First-born of every creature ;" for "by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible." In Him dwelleth "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and "He is the head of all principality and power, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person"—that Word which in the beginning was with God and was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made : that in order to procure redemption for His people, this Divine Person condescended to become the Son of Man, or, in the emphatical language of Scripture, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ;" and He who was the Son of God was found in fashion as a man, having assumed the human nature into a personal union with His Divinity, and thus was furnished with ample authority and ability to execute His mediatorial office : that the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, God manifested in the flesh, having fully revealed and perfectly obeyed the Divine law, and exhibiting in His life and character a pattern of absolute perfection, He laid down His life as a real and proper sacrifice for sin, to satisfy the justice of God and expiate the guilt of an elect world : that having thus made His soul an offering for sin and suffered the just for the unjust, He triumphed over death by His Divine power ; He arose from the dead, and ascended to the

\* Porter's *Life of Cooke*, 1st ed., p. 155.

† *Minutes of Synod of Ulster* : *Sketch* by the Rev. W. M'Clure in Hamilton's *Presbyterian Worthies*.

right hand of the Majesty on high, where He intercedes on behalf of His people, and graciously dispenses the gifts He has purchased with His precious blood : and that our blessed Redeemer will come again in the character of a judge to take vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of His Son, but to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe, when the consolation and joy of His redeemed shall be complete.

These are truths of the greatest moment and importance, which ought to be frequently inculcated and repeatedly insisted upon ; for “ This is life eternal, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.” The natures of our blessed Lord as God and man in one person, the offices He executes as the Prophet, Priest, and King of His Church, the merit of His atoning blood and the efficacy of His Divine Spirit, the necessity of His justifying righteousness and the unsearchable riches of His grace, the constitution of that covenant whereof He is sole Mediator, with a display of the promises of it, which are exceeding great and precious—in a word, the way and manner in which guilty and apostate creatures are reconciled to God and vitally united to Jesus Christ, who “ of God is made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; ” these and other doctrines connected with them are necessary to be made known, and it is an indispensable part of a teacher of the religion of Jesus to publish and declare them. Without pretending to dictate to any, these, I imagine, are fundamental articles of our holy faith ; they are inseparably connected with the Gospel ; and whosoever overlooks these important truths, or treats them in a superficial manner, has little claim to the character of a preacher of Jesus Christ.—*Sermon*, pp. 5, 6.

#### HOW TO PREACH MORALITY.

Morality we ought to preach, and it is perfectly consistent with preaching Christ. But whilst we are to recommend the great duties of morality, we are to represent them as proper evidences and genuine fruits of faith in Jesus Christ. This it is which produces that Divine temper styled in Scripture “ the new creature,” and lays the foundation of Gospel obedience. The great and important duties of the Christian life are most powerfully recommended by motives immediately respecting Christ ; such as that love to Him which should constrain us, that fear of His displeasure and wrath which should continually influence conduct, the desire we ought always to cherish of approving ourselves His faithful disciples and followers, the concern we should have for His honour and glory, the unspeakable pleasure of enjoying communion and fellowship with Him, and the joyful hope of having confidence and not being ashamed before Him at His coming. Besides, we are to direct our hearers to the spirit of



Christ for assistance, informing them that every duty must be performed by grace derived from Him. Our fruitfulness in obedience depends upon our union with Christ ; and inasmuch as without Him we can do nothing, through Christ strengthening us we may do all things. And at the same time it is necessary to inform them that our religious services are acceptable in the sight of God only through Jesus Christ ; for after all that we have done and can do, we are unprofitable servants ; and, instead of depending on anything done by us as the ground of our justification, we must renounce all confidence in the flesh and seek to be found in Christ alone, not having our own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

These are circumstances of much importance ; indeed, they are essential to the preaching of Christ, for if ever we are so happy as to reform the lives of our hearers, to convert their hearts to God, and train them up for heaven, it must be done by the principles of the Gospel of Christ. Unless we have such a high esteem for the Gospel, and so full a persuasion of its Divine worth and power, as to take it along with us in all our public instructions, we had better lay down our ministry and abandon our sacred profession ; for we will spend our strength for nought and waste our time in vain declamation. A minister may preach during his life upon the moral precepts of Christianity, without any real advantage to his hearers ; he may treat moral subjects in such a manner as may lead his people away from the Saviour, and carry them blindfolded into everlasting perdition. The Apostles of our blessed Lord are in this, as in other respects, the best pattern for us to copy after ; they introduced upon all occasions the peculiar doctrines of Christianity into their discourses and epistles, and they carefully enforced the duties they enjoined by the regard which Christians owe to Jesus Christ Himself. Honesty is recommended from the consideration that the unrighteous, thieves, and extortioners shall not inherit the kingdom of God ; which in the style of the New Testament signifies Christ's kingdom of grace here and glory hereafter. Chastity is enjoined from the consideration that our bodies are members of Christ and temples of His Holy Spirit. Alms deeds are recommended, because Christ for our sakes became poor. Husbands are charged to love their wives as Christ loved the Church ; and servants are exhorted to be faithful and diligent that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour. Now, is there anything in these motives peculiar to one age or nation ? Do not Christians in every period of the Church stand in need of these powerful arguments to engage them to the practice of their duty ? Why, then, should not we introduce the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel as frequently as the Apostles did ?—*Sermon*, pp. 7-9.

## CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

ROBERT BLACK, D.D. (1777-1817),

MINISTER AT DROMORE AND LONDONDERRY.

1. *A Catechism*.
2. *An Oration* delivered in the Meeting-house, Londonderry, on the Centenary of the Siege. Thursday, 7th December, 1788, O.S. 1788.
3. *Speech*, not published, but an Abstract found in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 25th January, 1793. L. H. L.
4. *Substance of Two Speeches* delivered at the Meeting of Synod in 1812, with an Abstract of the proceedings relative to the Rev. Dr. Dickson. Pp. 79. *Dublin*, 1812. M. C. D.

OF this eminent minister very few memorials survive. His *Catechism* I know only through Dr. Reid's *Notebook*, in which it is mentioned. Of his *Oration*, I cannot say whether it was ever published or not. His *Speech*, as given in the *Newsletter* of that day, is but a brief summary. The *Substance* of his two Synodical speeches is well known, but it gives no adequate idea of a man who, by all accounts, was the first great orator in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland prior to Dr. Cooke.

Robert Black was born in 1752. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Armagh, and in 1776 he received a call from the congregation of Keady, which he saw it his duty to decline. His wife, Margaret Black, was a cousin of his own.

Dromore, in County Down, was left vacant in 1777 by the death of Dr. Colville, who, it will be remembered, had given Synod and Presbytery so much trouble in 1724, during the height of the Non-Subscription con-

troversy. During his ministry the congregation stood in a state of separation from the Synod, but on the death of Dr. Colville it gave a call to Mr. Black and returned to its old ecclesiastical connection with the Synod of Ulster. He accepted the invitation, and was ordained there by the Presbytery of Armagh on the 18th of June, 1777.

Prompted by the popular enthusiasm in favour of the Volunteers, Mr. Black threw himself heartily into that great movement. He sometimes preached a stirring sermon to the local companies, clad in his regimentals as an officer, and using the drumhead as a book-board. It was an eloquent speech which he made at the Dungannon Convention in 1783, which won him the friendship of the Earl of Bristol and of Mr. Robert Moore of Molenan, and led to his removal to the junior pastorate of the First Congregation of Derry. His salary was £120 per annum. He was installed there on the 7th of January, 1784.

On the death of Mr. James Laing, Synod Agent for *Regium Donum*, in 1788, a special meeting of the Synod of Ulster was called at Dungannon on the 2d of December. There evidently had been an effort made to bring up the friends of one candidate for the vacant post. The roll bears evidence that the Presbyteries of Derry, Letterkenny, Tyrone, and Dromore mustered in great strength, and Mr. Black was elected as Synod Agent by a great majority over Dr. Campbell of Armagh and others. The annual meeting of 1789 did not sustain the special meeting held at Dungannon as a regular meeting of Synod; but it did not venture to annul the act which had been done, and Mr. Black was continued in the position which he had secured.

He had scarcely returned from the Dungannon meeting of Synod when he was called on to take part in the first centenary celebration of the shutting of the gates of Derry. The whole city turned out on that occasion in public procession. "From the church," we are told, "the procession marched in the same order to the Meeting-house, where the Rev. Mr. Black delivered an

oration which evinced at once his knowledge of British history and his ardent zeal for liberty."

His first efforts as Synodical Agent were given to augment the income of his brethren in the matter of Regium Donum. In 1792, through the influence of the Earl of Charlemont, the celebrated Henry Grattan, and Colonel Stewart of Killymoon, a motion in their favour was carried in the Irish Parliament, and a grant of £500 a year was added to the small sum annually divided among the Presbyterian ministers of Ireland. When the Synod met at Lurgan in 1793, he gave a narrative of the material circumstances relative to the late grant, and a copy of it was ordered to be taken in a fair hand in order to be bound and preserved among our Synodical records.\* At the same time the thanks of the body were given to Mr. Black for preparing this narrative, and for making known the honourable terms on which the grant was obtained. To mark its gratitude for his services, the Synod presented him with a piece of plate valued at a hundred pounds, surmounted by a suitable inscription, which was drawn up by Mr. Livingstone of Clare and Mr. Barber of Rathfriland.

Mr. Black sympathised with the objects of the Volunteers, and was at first in favour of sweeping from the statute book the penal laws which pressed so injuriously upon the Roman Catholics of Ireland. But as the movement developed, and especially when he saw the results which followed the struggle for liberty in France, he, in common with many others, became wise in time, and shook himself free of a movement which he clearly saw would end in civil war. He discouraged the proceedings of the United Irishmen, and warned the Church, so far as it was in his power, against the schemes of a party who were meditating a rising, which, if successful, would revolutionise the country in the worst sense, and, if unsuccessful, would produce untold misery at many a fireside. He succeeded with many, but some did not know good advice when they received

\* What has come of this record? It is not found in the MS. *Minutes*.

it, and had to suffer the consequences. He frequently referred to this painful topic in his public appearances; and his sentiments may be known by his speech at a meeting of the inhabitants of the parish of Templemore, held in Derry Cathedral, on the 14th of January, 1793.

It is in the *Minutes* of 1801 that Mr. Black is for the first time designated Dr. Black. In a history of the First Congregation of Derry, prepared by Dr. Reid and inserted in the *Ordnance Survey of the County of Londonderry*, it is stated that the degree of Doctor in Divinity was sent him by an American college.

Dr. Black was a friend and correspondent of Lord Castlereagh, who in the years between 1798 and 1820 exercised a great influence first on Irish, and then, after the Union of the kingdom, on British and foreign politics. It was he who, on behalf of the Synod, entered into correspondence with this celebrated statesman in regard to that arrangement with Government which very largely increased the *Regium Donum*. It was proposed to distribute the increased grant on the principle of allowing £100 per annum to the ministers of the largest congregations, £75 to the second class, and £50 to the weakest or third-class congregations. None of the ministers had any objection to the increase, but many of them objected to the classification, thinking that a distinction of this sort in the salaries of pastors, all of whom were officially equal, was calculated to produce jealousy and feuds. In 1800 Dr. Black had announced himself a convert to the principle of classification, and it turned out that those who contended for parity of endowment found in him their most resolute enemy. On one occasion the Synod sent a deputation to remonstrate at the Castle, against what they regarded as an objectionable mode of distributing the proposed grant. As the deputation entered the audience-room, they found Dr. Black had been there before them; they met him coming out with a triumphant smile upon his face, and after a civil reception, His Excellency informed them—"The conditions could not be changed, but if the Synod pleased they *could reject the grant altogether*,



to which the Government would have no objection." It is needless to say that the Synod did not reject the grant, notwithstanding the unpalatable arrangement by which it was accompanied. Favours to Dissenters came seldom, and when they came they were usually attended with some unmeaning and galling accompaniment that diminished the gratitude of the recipient, and converted the kindness into something like an affront. That seems to have been the settled policy on which the Government dealt with the Presbyterians for more than a century.

In 1809 he received the thanks of the Synod for his exertions in having a bill carried through Parliament securing the capital of the Widows' Fund, and legalising arrangements for its management—arrangements which in their main features remain unchanged till the present time.

His celebrated quarrel with Dr. Dickson, who blamed him for certain expressions entered on the records of the Synod during the imprisonment of himself and of other ministers concerned with the Rebellion of 1798, led to his delivering two speeches in the Synod of 1812, the *Substance* of which was afterwards published, and is, in fact, the only literary production of his, known to the present generation. However effective in delivery, it gives no adequate idea of the powers of a man who was for many years leader of the Synod of Ulster, and who, as a speaker on general subjects, was regarded, by some good judges who heard both, as equal if not superior to Dr. Cooke.\*

During the last years of Dr. Black's life, his feelings were occasionally tried by younger men, who forgot services which he conceived he had rendered to the Synod at a time when they were only lads at school, and who carried sometimes the majority of the Synod against him in public debate. This was noticeably the case in regard to the Belfast Institution, in which the

\* This opinion I have heard expressed in conversation by Rev. Robert Park of Ballymoney and by the Rev. Charles Kennedy of Maghera, both of whom had heard Dr. Black.

Synod fondly hoped to find a safe place where a home education suitable to candidates for the ministry could be conferred, but which Lord Castlereagh, and Dr. Black also, regarded as a species of hotbed, in which would grow up, along with the tree of knowledge, the more dubious plants of Whiggery and independence. In the Synod of 1816 he was repeatedly defeated in attempts to injure that new-born seminary, and subjected to sore humiliation. To mollify the pain of his discomfiture, his friends and admirers in the Synod treated him to a public dinner. The entertainment came off in a hotel in Ann Street—then one of the best hostelries which Belfast could afford. The damp showed through the walls of the room; the paper, loosened from its place, hung in festoons around the apartment; everything at the feast wore the air of discomfort, gloom, desolation—the foreshadow of a calamity that was to occur in less than six months after.\* Around the festive board, in that miserable chamber of a miserable inn, the Synodical leader of the past and the Synodical leader of the future met together, it is supposed, for the last time. The fact at the time was equally a secret to them both.

In the *Ulster Synod*, a satirical poem of 1817, Dr. Black is referred to in the following terms:—

“A dark-browed chief from Derry’s far-famed walls,  
With scowling looks for fixed attention calls;  
Nigrinus rises midst the sacred crew:  
But why that fretwork brow, that lip upcurled,  
That eye which darts defiance to the world?”

Then, alluding to defeats and humiliations, with their results, in the Synod, the writer says:—

“Pity it were a nature formed, like thine,  
O’er glow-worm vulgar intellects to shine,  
The temple, bar, or senate to illume,  
And leave a light to live beyond the tomb,  
Should by aught earthly crost, with oblique ray,  
Bedimmed by frailty’s fogs, in weakened lustre stray.”

It is supposed that these humiliations connected with

\* Told me in conversation by Dr. Cooke.

his public position, and also losses connected with the Widows' Fund, of which he was the agent and manager, preyed upon his mind. From whatever cause, his strong intellect gave way, and in the twilight of a winter day (4th of December, 1817), in a temporary aberration of mind, he threw himself over the parapet of the bridge of Derry, and was drowned in the Foyle. The body was recovered, and after an inquest was interred in the grounds of the chapel of ease. Some years afterwards, when the grave was opened to inter another member of the family, it was observed that not a single vestige of the body of the venerable minister remained. From some cause, never explained, it had entirely disappeared.

"He was," says Dr. Montgomery, "a man of great ability, extraordinary address, and some amiable qualities; but he wanted political integrity, coveted the possession of uncontrollable power, and lost his influence by the constant exhibition of a haughty and selfish disposition."\*

Dr. Black left a family of three sons and two daughters. Robert, the eldest son, died early; Joseph obtained a situation in the Customs; the youngest, William, became an officer in the army. One of his daughters married Dr. Cuming, a most respectable physician at Armagh; another was married to a Mr. Smith, the father of Mr. Carey Smith of Belfast.

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#### POLITICAL ADVICE.

At this season of agitation and alarm, it may perhaps be useful to state what I know to be the sentiments of the sober and rational part of the community—of the middle men, who see the abuses of the constitution and wish to remove them, but who see also, and would steadily oppose, the working of a few seditious spirits, who wish to commit the country to hostilities, to overturn the constitution, and to try improved theories. Of these middle men I profess to be one, and express my conviction that throughout Ulster, with which I have reason to be particularly acquainted, they are in proportion to the factious as ninety-nine in a hundred.

\* *Irish Unitarian Magazine* for 1847, p. 287. See also *Minutes of Synod of Ulster*: Dickson's *Retractations*: and Reid's MS. *Notebook*.

I declare myself to be, from education, conviction, and principle, an admirer of the British constitution, which has been adopted by the Irish nation. With a fair and honest representation in the House of Commons, it is fitted to promote more real and durable political happiness than any other existing form of government in the world; and I have no hesitation in declaring that I prefer it to any republican form, ancient or modern, from the conviction that it is better calculated to secure political liberty and personal independence. I wish to warn the yeomanry of the country against the practices of a few designing men, whose object is to depreciate the constitution in order to destroy it. I trust that in this neighbourhood there are no characters of so vile a description; but it is notorious that in other places there are men who busy themselves in attempts to pervert and mislead the sentiments of the people by the most unwarrantable publications. I know these men will be disappointed; there is in the nation a fund of good sense and discretion which will preserve it from delusion. If the artifices of turbulent and discontented individuals, working on the well-meant but misguided zeal of particular districts, should excite a local insurrection (which I trust will not be the case), it would be quickly quelled, and the leaders exposed to the punishment and infamy due to an act of such atrocious folly. I would venture to say that such an insurrection would be suppressed by the voluntary exertions of the nation, even without the aid of Government, from the abhorrence with which it would be viewed by every honest member of society. But are we to suppose Government will be torpid or indifferent on such an emergency? Doubtless it would not; violence will be crushed the moment it appears; and I again repeat, the leaders, with perhaps too many of their well-meaning though deluded followers, will be made to feel the deplorable consequences of their political madness. With respect to the means of obtaining a reform in the representation of the people, I will frankly and explicitly declare my sentiments, which I have frequently avowed, and for my consistency, in which I appeal both to my friends and to my enemies; my means would be ARGUMENT, PETITION, REMONSTRANCE, but not force. Gross abuses exist in the constitution, which ought, and I believe will be speedily redressed; but I know of none which would justify the risk of civil war or the shedding of blood to remove.—*Speech in Derry Cathedral at a meeting of the inhabitants of Templemore, on the 14th January, 1793.*

#### ACTION OF THE SYNOD IN REGARD TO DISLOYAL MINISTERS.

In the summer of 1798, during the progress of a rebellion, the object of which was to separate Ireland from Great Britain, and to establish a republican government under the protection of France, a few ministers of the Synod were arrested, some on direct charges, and others on suspicion of being engaged in this

mad and criminal project. In this number was the Rev. Dr. Dickson of Portaferry, who is stated in an Appendix to a Report published by the Committee of the House of Lords to have held the rank of *Adjutant-General of the rebel army in the County of Down*.

The Synod had been prevented by the disturbed state of the country from meeting at the usual period in June, and was assembled by notice from the Moderator on the 28th of August following. Its deliberations were clouded by feelings of distress and sorrow. It had a new and humiliating duty to perform. Until lately, the principles of a well-regulated liberty, as remote from licentiousness as from slavish submission to arbitrary power, had distinguished the Presbyterians of Ulster. From their settlement in Ireland, in the reign of James I., they had adopted the sentiments of the English Puritans, to whom, in the judgment of Mr. Hume, Great Britain is indebted for her present constitution, and their conduct in the various struggles which marked the succeeding reigns obtained for them the confidence and gratitude of the friends of limited monarchy. During the five years which preceded the rebellion, a mournful change had taken place with many, and in 1798 the Synod could no longer boast that it did not contain a traitor.

The meeting was attended by fifty-two ministers and thirteen elders ; a large number when it is considered that the province was still under considerable agitation, the hopes of the disaffected being revived by the landing of a French force in Connaught. Under these awful circumstances the Synod did not shrink from its duty, but, with a firmness which must ever ensure it the approbation of every well-judging and well-principled man, either in or out of its communion, proceeded to declare its sentiments on the alarming state of the community, and of its own guilty and misguided members.

It addressed his Majesty in the language of attachment and loyalty, requesting "permission to lay at the foot of the throne the expression of its shame and sorrow for the crimes and misconduct of the country, and to lament that the principles of too many of its people and of some of its members had been shaken by the convulsions of a sceptical and revolutionary era." It addressed the people under its care in a pastoral letter, ordered to be read from every pulpit and distributed in every congregation ; and it enjoined the several Presbyteries "to institute a solemn inquiry into the conduct of their respective members and probationers ; to distinguish impartially between the innocent and the guilty, that the ministry might be blameless, and to make a faithful report at the next meeting."

At the next meeting, in 1799, which was attended by eighty ministers and twenty-three elders, the following declaration was unanimously adopted :—"The several Presbyteries having made their reports, according to the injunction of the last meeting,



this Synod has the satisfaction of finding that the general conduct of its members and probationers has been conformable to order and good government in the late afflicting circumstances of the country. It appears that, of the comparatively small number who have been implicated in treasonable or seditious practices, two only, one a minister, the other a probationer, have been executed ; two are still in confinement ; some have expressed their sincere contrition ; others are no longer connected with the Synod, and the remainder have, either voluntarily or by permission of Government, removed from the kingdom."—*Substance*, pp. 1-4.

#### PORTER OF GREYABBEY.

It is well known to many in this house the early acquaintance I had with that unfortunate man. I married him, and to my countenance and friendship afterwards it was chiefly owing that he became a member of this Synod. But alas ! he formed new connections and followed other counsellors. Thank God, I am "pure from the blood of all men." Wherever in those awful times I possessed influence, tranquillity prevailed. No congregation charges me with having drawn them to the brink of a precipice ; whoever was guided by my opinions stood safe. No widow imputes to my counsels and society the loss of her husband : no child ascribes to my advice the regrets associated with the name of father.—*Substance*, p. 49.

## CHAPTER XC.

JAMES ELDER (1780—1843),

MINISTER OF FINVOY.

1. *The Blessedness of those who Die in the Lord.* A Sermon preached at Aghadowey, the last Sabbath of July, 1788, on the death of the Rev. Samuel Hamilton, and published at the request of that Congregation. [Rev. xiv. 13.] 12mo, pp. 24. Derry, 1789. T. L. S.
2. *Gratitude to God for His Goodness.* A Sermon preached at Finvoy on Thursday, the 23d of April, 1789, being the National Thanksgiving for his Majesty's recovery, and published at the request of the Audience. [Ps. cvii. 8.] 12mo, pp. 24. Derry, 1789. T. L. S.
3. *A Sermon* preached in the Meeting-house of Drumachose on the 13th January, 1828, in defence of the Doctrine of *Justification by the Imputed Righteousness of Christ.* [Phil. iii. 8, 9.] 8vo, pp. 39. Derry, 1828. T. W.

JAMES ELDER was born at Ballury, near Garvagh, in County Derry, on the 25th of December, 1757. He was almost twenty-one at the time he was licensed, and on the 13th June, 1780, he was ordained as assistant to the Rev. Gideon Nelson of Finvoy, in the County Antrim. In his youth and manhood he was a very popular preacher, and exercised a healthy religious influence in the surrounding district, on both sides of the Bann.

His only efforts in the way of authorship are three sermons, preached on public occasions, published at the request of others, and all distinguished more for their rich old Scriptural theology than for freshness of expression or originality of thought. The first is a funeral sermon for his friend and neighbour, Mr. Hamilton of

Aghadowey; the second is a thanksgiving sermon for the recovery of George III.; the third is a doctrinal discourse preached at Drumachose during the heat of the Arian controversy.

Mr. Elder was at all times a loyal and well-affected subject of the Crown, and at a time when many were carried away by the mania which culminated in the Irish Rebellion of 1798, he used his influence in favour of peace, and saved his neighbourhood from the rough revenge which Government exacted so relentlessly from the misguided people. He affirmed that a republic in Ireland would degenerate into the supremacy of Romanism or infidelity, and that under the domination of either one or other true freedom must soon perish.

The minister of Finvoy was one of the few, who, when the leaders of the Synod were either secretly Arian, or at least destitute of all evangelical spirit, lifted up their voices fearlessly for orthodoxy and truth. He was regular in attendance at Presbytery and Synod, and never lost any fair opportunity of calling the attention of his brethren to the good old ways, and of urging them to adopt the then almost forgotten principle of unqualified subscription to the Confession of Faith. But for many a year he was as one "crying in the wilderness." His words fell without making any visible impression on his brethren. He wanted that nameless gift necessary to concentrate the force of orthodoxy, and hurl it in mass against the error which was threatening the very life of religion in the Synod. But when, at the end of years, a man did make his appearance, gifted in an eminent degree with this rare talent, he found in James Elder a faithful and indefatigable supporter. His sermon on justification, preached at Drumachose when the Arian controversy was at its height, is, however, his only published contribution in support of the Trinitarian faith.

Mr. Elder survived to be very old, and before he died had come to be regarded as the Father of the Synod of Ulster. At the union of the two Synods in 1840, he,

along with the Rev. John Rogers of Glascar, occupied the chair conjointly until the newly-formed General Assembly had chosen a Moderator of its own. His name thus appropriately closes the long roll of Moderators of the Synod of Ulster, extending over a period of one hundred and fifty years. Nominally the Synod still exists, and holds a brief meeting annually, and annually appoints a Moderator; but all interest attaching to it as a separate body has been lost since it merged in the General Assembly.

To the close Mr. Elder retained the love of his congregation and the respect of the Church. Only in the last year of his life did he consent to the appointment of an assistant, and no more worthy helper could be found than the Rev. Andrew Todd, who settled at Finvoy in the autumn of 1843. The senior pastor did not live very long after Mr. Todd's ordination. He died on the 4th of November in that same year, leaving behind him a name and character for old Puritanic ways which will long be a tradition in the congregation and district for miles around. Professor Croskery has no less beautifully than truthfully said of Mr. Elder:—

“He was a mighty man of prayer, a preacher of the old Covenanting type—a man who could make mistakes and offend scrupulous ears, but with an Old Testament gravity and unction about him, fond of old-fashioned Puritan thought—a man therefore in that arid time, when souls were famishing and beginning to look eagerly for the bread of life, far better fitted to reach hearts and fill heaven with hearers than your cultivated and classical preachers, never breaking a canon of taste in the pulpit, never using a vulgar illustration, always smooth and correct, but never pricking a conscience, and never pulling down a single stone of the devil's kingdom. . . . He threw heart and soul into his preaching, and sent his people away with the feeling that he wished them well; he blew the old Calvinistic trumpet with no uncertain sound, and flew out against all Arians, Arminians, and Socinians, who dared

to mar God's truth, proclaiming through sermons that were dogmatic, positive, and distinct, the old doctrines of the Westminster Divines—the total corruption of human nature, Christ's death on the cross the only satisfaction for sin, justification by faith, the necessity of heart-conversion, and the connection between true faith and personal holiness. . . . He was the means of keeping Finvoy free from heresies during his ministry. Arianism never touched its borders. As a friend tells me, 'He kept his people free from heresy more by denouncing error and praying it down than by reasoning it down; his usual prayer was to be delivered from the soul-destroying errors—Arianism, Arminianism, and Socinianism.'"\*

A very good portrait of the venerable patriarch of Finvoy was published in an early number of M'Comb's Almanac. The Rev. Marshal Moore of Faughanvale was married to his daughter; and Marshal Moore, jun., who for a short time was minister at Glendermot, and died when he had only entered on what promised to be a bright and useful pastorate, was his grandson.

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#### MINISTRY OF HAMILTON OF AGHADOWEY.

Although he met with great opposition in preaching the glorious doctrines of the Gospel, yet he never did shrink, but maintained his fidelity to the end, and obtained the promise—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The portrait of his character must stand unfinished, did I not assume the liberty of mentioning some of the doctrines which he preached. The Divinity of our Lord was the foundation on which he erected the stately edifice. Our apostasy in the first Adam, our recovery by the glorious second Adam, the doctrine of electing and redeeming love, justification by faith, salvation by grace, and the absolute necessity of evangelical holiness, were the darling themes which adorned his public ministrations. These doctrines, and others connected with them, he preached in his life, gloried in upon a sickbed, and upon this foundation he

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\* Sketch in *Evangelical Witness* for 1870, p. 62.



is exalted to the regions of glory. Oh, how steadfastly did he "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints!" Oh, with what Christian fortitude did he maintain the cause of his Redeemer amidst all opposition from every quarter! and if he had been called upon, he would have laid down his life upon a scaffold for the cause of the Gospel.—*The Blessedness*, pp. 21, 22.

#### TENDENCY OF ARIANISM.

Arianism has a chilling tendency upon religion, both in principle and practice; wherever it lays its hand, religion dies. Our Lord says, Matt. vii. 26, "By their fruits ye shall know them;" and John x. 20, "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me." The destructive effects of Arianism are clearly evident if we take a view of the Synod of Munster in the south of this kingdom. Within a century ago, that Church was composed of fifty flourishing Presbyterian congregations, and now they are reduced to eight, and these do not contain at present as many persons as are in this assembly. And what was the cause of the extinction of these once flourishing congregations? Arianism crept in gradually among the ministers, visitation Presbyteries ceased, there was no restraint upon corruption, and thus these once flourishing congregations died by the deadly poison of Arianism.

Stand fast, then, my friends, with one spirit, with one mind, striving for the faith of the Gospel. Buy the truth and sell it not. Follow no man any farther than he follows Christ Jesus the Lord. Teach your families the truths of the Gospel by conscientiously reading the Word of God in your houses, by catechising your families every Lord's evening out of the Westminster Catechism, Larger and Shorter, and making them well acquainted with the Westminster Confession of Faith; and this will be a happy means of preserving your posterity from the soul-destroying poison of Arianism, Socinianism, and Arminianism.—*Sermon at Drumachose*, p. 29.

## CHAPTER XCI.

JOHN LEWSON (1738—1802),

MINISTER OF CAIRNCASTLE.

*The Gospel a Plain and Sufficient Rule.* A Sermon preached at the Ordination of the Rev. Robert Acheson, in Glenarm. [John viii. 12.] pp. 26. *Belfast*, 1793. C. P. L.

MR. JOHN LEWSON was a native of Dunmurry, where he was born in 1716. He was educated at the University of Glasgow, and on the 20th December, 1738, was ordained as successor to the Rev. William Taylor, the third in succession among the pastors of Cairncastle. With Mr. Lewson the congregation returned from the Presbytery of Antrim to the Synod of Ulster.

The Rev. Classon Porter, in his interesting sketch of Lewson, observes :—

“He was spared to see the trying times of 1798, but being then 92 (82?) years of age, he did not, of course, take any active part in the proceedings of that eventful period. On the eve of the insurrection, the old man preached to his people, and amongst other observations, made one simple remark, which is still remembered by the very few survivors of his congregation who heard it, to the effect that in the coming struggle ‘he had not much to lose.’ In these words the pastor, I think, referred not to the scantiness of his worldly means, but to the few years which, under any circumstances, he could expect to live. . . . By his influence with the landed proprietors of the district, he procured in a great

many cases for the occupying tenants of Cairncastle leases in perpetuity of the lands which they occupied, at a rent, in nearly every instance, of a very few shillings per acre. I have been told that but for Mr. Lewson there would have been very few leases of that kind in Cairncastle. And, strange to say, the difficulty which he had in effecting these arrangements was not to get the landlords to give, but to induce the tenants to accept, these leases in perpetuity; some of the tenants actually refusing to bind themselves to pay 2s. 6d. an acre for ever for land which is now set at 50s. or £3 an acre without a lease at all. I am sorry to add that even those who at this time did take out leases in perpetuity on these highly favourable terms did not thereby secure for their descendants 'fixity of tenure;' for in the present day the cases are very few indeed in which the lands thus leased are now in the possession or occupation of the lineal descendants of the original lessees."

The only published work of Mr. Lewson is his sermon at the ordination in Glenarm on the 19th July, 1792. His text is Christ, "the light of the world." He shows, in the first place, the Gospel as giving clear directions for the knowledge of God; it represents the principles of natural religion as the foundation of virtue; it sets moral and religious truth in an intelligible light; it reveals clearly the terms of Divine acceptance; it holds forth the Divine example and the promise of the Spirit's help to free men from works of darkness; and it makes a clear discovery of a future world. He then proceeds to illustrate some general principles founded on the Gospel as the light of the world; it is intended for the weak no less than the learned; it is sufficient to guide them in the way to salvation, if they sincerely improve their capacities; and, being a perfect light, nothing can be a necessary part of it which is superior to man's capacity, and therefore unintelligible to him. Lastly, he improves the subject, as the occasion suggests, by pointing out the duty of teachers to improve in useful knowledge, and to make the light of the Gospel the rule of their doctrine and life, and by inculcating on the

people to search the Scriptures and not the creeds or systems of men.

It is certainly a remarkable sermon for a man so far advanced in years. It brings out some of the main features of the New Light divinity, such as the antipathy to creeds, and the notion that mystery of any kind is inconsistent with the very nature of revelation. The stress also which is laid upon sincerity and the duties of moral obligation, as if they stood to the creature in place of the atonement of the Saviour, indicates clearly the school of thought to which the preacher belongs. If we could overlook the grand defect that it omits to state plainly the only method by which a sinner can obtain reconciliation to God, we could not deny it the praise of saying that it is in other respects an excellent discourse, characterised by much that is plain, sensible, and good.

Mr. Lewson died on the 15th of September, 1802, and was interred in the family burying-ground of the Shaws of Ballygally, with which old and respectable Presbyterian family he was connected by friendship and by domestic ties. His second wife was Margaret Nevin, daughter of Rev. Thomas Nevin of Downpatrick, by whom he left one daughter—Margaret Nevin Lewson. Miss Lewson married Mr. Shaw of Ballygally, by whom she had one son and four daughters, three of whom were alive in 1865. After her husband's death, she was again married to the Rev. Thomas Alexander, her father's successor. One of her sons by this marriage, Rev. Henry Alexander, was for some time minister of the Remonstrant congregation of Newry.\*

#### THE EXAMPLE OF MINISTERS.

The last thing to be recommended to teachers is a wise and virtuous example. "They are lights to the world." It should be their study "to let their light so shine before men that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven."

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\* *Minutes of Synod of Ulster: Christian Unitarian*, vol. iv. pp. 260-267 and 294-300.

This is necessary to recommend religion to the love of others. If we profess religion, and fall in with the prevailing folly of our company, will this recommend us to their esteem? No, we become in their view truly contemptible. In our absence they will speak aloud their contempt. But mark the man who in his spirit and conduct maintains a regular regard to religion and virtue: he commands esteem and respect even from the most shameless and corrupt. This adds weight and influence to his instructions. Men are convinced he is in earnest. When he is not guilty, nor awed by a consciousness of criminal base practices, he can warn against such practices with zeal and just indignation. A preacher of known disingenuity, covetousness, intemperance, and profanity is above all men deservedly contemptible. Though he could speak with elegance and propriety, his words are viewed as not coming from the heart. When his character is well known, it is amazing he can have such shameless impudence as to preach at all. Men know he lies and does not the truth. But that man who is "an example to believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in purity," commands the esteem of all, even the wicked not excepted. When he shows out of a good conversation his faith with meekness and wisdom, he will put to silence foolish and ungodly men.—*Ordination Sermon*, pp. 20, 21.

#### PEOPLE NOT EDIFIED.

Perhaps this is true. But why lay all the blame on one side? Is no part of it your own? Can you assert any one useless, incapable to do any good to the sincere and attentive? Teachers are all imperfect, for "Who is sufficient for these things?" After all such complaints, let us try our own hearts and tempers. Why was I not edified? Did I hear without prejudice and sincere attention? How am I to judge of edification? What is edification? Is it affecting the imagination, pleasing my humour and fancy? It cannot be this. In the New Testament it signifies improvement in useful knowledge, in love to God and mankind, as our Lord gave commandment. Now, by the most despised preacher was there nothing delivered that had a tendency to this most important end? Was there nothing fit to raise religious sentiments and affections? Can I assert this? No, certainly. Why, then, did I feel no benefit? May I not suspect that some base prejudice, some criminal affection in my heart, marred my edification?—*Ordination Sermon*, pp. 23, 24.



## CHAPTER XCII.

THOMAS LEDLIE BIRCH, M.A. (1776—1798),

MINISTER OF SAINTFIELD.

1. *The Obligation upon Christians*, and especially Ministers, to be exemplary in their lives; particularly at this important period, when the prophecies are seemingly about to be fulfilled in the Fall of Antichrist, as an introduction to the flowing in of Jew and Gentile into the Christian Church. Synodical Sermon on Matt. v. 16. pp. 36. *Belfast*, 1794. M. C. D.
2. *Physicians Languishing under Disease*. An Address to the Seceding or Associate Synod of Ireland, upon certain tenets and practices alleged to be in enmity with all religious reformation. pp. 47. *Belfast*, 1796. A. C. B.

ON the 21st May, 1776, Mr. THOMAS LEDLIE BIRCH was ordained as minister of Saintfield in succession to Rev. Richard Walker. Though never raised to the position of Moderator, he preached before the Synod in 1794 a sermon on Matt. v. 16, which he subsequently published. It is a commonplace address, remarkable for nothing except for fixing on 1848 as the time of the fall of the Papacy. The Papacy did not fall at the time mentioned, but in that year a train of causes was set in motion which resulted in the overthrow of the temporal power of the Pope in 1870. Birch most probably borrowed the date 1848 from Fleming's *Fulfilling of Prophecy*.

The only other publication of Mr. Birch is an invective against the Seceders, who in his time were extending their evangelistic operations to Saintfield; but it does not suggest to the reader a very favourable opinion either of his good sense or temper.

Mr. Birch was in some way concerned with the insurrection of 1798, in consequence of which, when the bubble burst, he left Saintfield and emigrated to America. He died there on the 12th of April, 1808.

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#### TESTING THE CONGREGATION.

Shortly after this, being told in a conversation with a supporter of Seceders in our place, that he hoped yet to see a Seceding preacher in the meeting-house of Saintfield, and [that] he believed it was the sense of the great body of the congregation, I replied I did not believe it was the case, but that it should soon be determined, for their minds would be taken upon the subject, and I should not desire to prevent the enjoyment of their wishes.

Accordingly the next Lord's Day, our meeting-house being remarkably full, and we having the celebration of the Lord's Supper very shortly in view, I observed to our people, before such a solemn approach we should be reconciled in our own minds concerning what religion we intended to adhere to; and as I was informed that it was the desire of the great majority of the congregation to renounce the communion of the Synod of Ulster and the Presbytery of Belfast, in which they had been baptized, and many of them had renewed their covenant at the Lord's table, and become Seceders—and undoubtedly they had a right to choose for themselves—I should defer the appointment of the preparation for the Lord's Supper until I should take their sentiments upon the next Lord's Day; and if it was their opinion to become Seceders, as I thought it much better that one man should be put to a disadvantage than a community should suffer, and the meeting-house might suffice to contain them all, they had not any occasion to divide, as I would instantly resign my charge.

Upon the ensuing Lord's Day I took the minds of the congregation, and before the question was put I observed that I would look upon those in a more friendly point of view, and esteem them honest men, who would stand up for what they deemed truth, than if they should keep back contrary to the dictates of their consciences; and therefore such as were for becoming Seceders would be pleased to step out of their seats. Upon which not one person standing forth, the preparation was appointed the next Lord's Day, and the Lord's Supper was held upon the following; and though it was the winter sacrament, there was a greater number of communicants than upon any former occasion, and even all those who had subscribed for Seceders, except three or four, came forward to the Lord's table.—*Physicians*, pp. 11–13.

## CHAPTER XCIII.

*HENRY HENRY* (1788—1840),

MINISTER AT GARVAGH AND AT CONNOR.

1. An *Address to the People of Connor*, containing a clear and full Vindication of the Synod of Ulster from the Aspersions of the people called Covenanters. [Written in the form of a Catechism, and in the name of Sanders Donald, late Sexton of Connor.] pp. 25. *Belfast*, 1794. A. C. B.
  2. An *Illustration of the Present Critical State* of the Synod of Ulster, in three Letters: 1. To the Ministers of the Synod of Ulster. 2. To the Rev. Robert Black, Bounty Agent. 3. To the Elders of the Synod of Ulster. By a Presbyterian, pp. 28. *Belfast*, 1802. M. C. D.
  3. A *Letter to the Congregation of Connor*. pp. 12. *Belfast*, 1812. A. C. B.
- [Two Letters of Henry are published in an anonymous Life of George Robert Fitzgerald.]

HENRY HENRY was a native of Dunboe, near Coleraine. He was ordained as minister of Garvagh, in County Derry, on the 13th May, 1788. He had been settled there but a few months, when he accepted a call to Connor, in County Antrim, where he was installed on the 9th of December in the same year.

The Reformed Presbyterians, popularly known as the Covenanters, were then at work in that neighbourhood, and were attempting to make inroads on his congregation. In order to check their aggressions, the young minister, in 1794, published a pamphlet, in which he deals in a rough, popular style with such statements as the Reformed were in the habit of making, to the disadvantage of the Synod, and disposes of them in a

dashing, reckless, tomahawk manner. It is written in the form of question and answer, and was published in the name of his church sexton. A sexton can, of course, without any great loss, say bold things, to which a minister would scarcely care to commit himself; and the minister who held the pen for Sanders Donald took full advantage of his mask to tell the public all he wished, and perhaps a little more than he ought.

It was understood that Mr. Henry's sympathies were with the United Irishmen, and at the time he did suffer a short imprisonment; but he does not appear to have committed himself too far. Dr. Black, at a later period, in the heat of a Synodical debate, taunted him with receiving mercy from the Government, but Henry on the spot indignantly denied the charge.

Some years afterwards, when the classification system of endowing the ministry was proposed by the Government, he published a pamphlet against it, in which he inveighed against Dr. Black, whom he regarded as, if not its real author, at least its most prominent advocate in the Synod. His reasoning is not more convincing than that of Sherrard of Tullylish, but he discusses the subject with more force. In 1803, the increased endowment, which, owing to a change of Government, had been delayed since 1801, was officially announced, and it was found that the proposal embodied the following features:—

1. Each minister on his ordination was to send a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant, asking for his share of *Regium Donum*, and this memorial was to be accompanied by a certificate, signed by two magistrates, stating that he had taken the oath of allegiance to the Crown. This was a temporary regulation, evidently suggested by what had occurred during the late rebellion, and very properly was required as a sort of safeguard against the disgrace and evil of granting an endowment to a disloyal minister.

2. A graduated scale of endowment among the ministers, some receiving £50, others £75, and others £100, in proportion to the size of their congregations.

By letter dated "Cookstown, July 1, 1803," the Synod of Ulster accepted the grant on the terms offered.

Against the acceptance of the grant on the terms proposed, Mr. Henry entered a vigorous protest couched in the following language:—

"1. Because I conceive our Heavenly Master has forbidden classification in His Church, and the example of the only Synod recorded in the New Testament is in opposition to it.

"2. Because the Synod refused to submit the Government plan of classification, with its conditions, to the consideration of its respective congregations.

"3. Because classified churches are, or have been, the most venal of all others, generally surrounded with external pomp and luxury.

"4. Because the Synod is classified by a power without itself, viz., the magistracy of the country, who, as such, are not church governors, and therefore have no right to classify this Synod.

"5. Because the conditions of the above plan will at least indirectly infringe on the privileges of Presbyterians relating to the election and emoluments of their clergy."

This is a sample of the arguments which were at the time advanced against classification. When the Synod accepted the increased grant on the terms offered, and especially when Mr. Henry did so, notwithstanding his protest, he was twitted with his inconsistency, and he was held accountable for the evil consequences, which, by his own admission, were involved in a principle that, although wrong, he had eventually adopted. It was even said that his real objection to classification was that he originally was put on the lowest class; but that he withdrew his protest when he found himself advanced to the highest. Probably his old friends the Covenanters, who were somewhat in his debt, spoke of him in this way. At least I find something very like it in a doggerel poem of the time, called the *Butterhorn*, said to have been written by a lay Covenanter of



the neighbourhood named Meek, whose production is not exactly in harmony with his name. The charge was entirely unfounded, for in any system of classification having for its basis the size of congregations, the minister of Connor would be well entitled to stand in the first class; but it gave origin to the publication of his *Letter to the Congregation* of Connor, dated 1st January, 1812, in which he dealt with it effectively.

Mr. Henry long sustained the character of a worthy and useful minister. His style of address and the tone of his voice must have been somewhat unsoft and lugubrious, if there be any truth underlying the following allusion :—

“ Nature, O Connor, formed thee upright, kind,  
Of heart benevolent, generous in thy mind ;  
I would not wound, but warn thee—Friend, farewell !  
But cease, oh, cease *thy harsh and funeral knell !*” \*

He died on the 11th November, 1840. When his death was reported by his Presbytery to the General Assembly, it was unanimously agreed :—

“ That this Assembly have heard with deep sympathy and regret the lamented death of their late highly respected and valuable brother in Christ, the Rev. Henry Henry of Connor; that they remember with admiration and gratitude his unwearied and enlightened zeal in the cause of His Divine Master in all departments of the Church, and his munificent liberality on all occasions on which he could advance the interests of religion; and that a copy of this resolution, accompanied by a letter, be transmitted by the Moderator to his aged and bereaved widow.”

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#### DEFENCE OF HIS CONDUCT.

In contradiction, then, to the first assertion of this defamer, let it be observed that Connor was in the first class when I entered my protest. The proof of this I rest not on my own authority; I appeal to your elder who accompanied me, likewise to the

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\* *The Ulster Synod*, a satirical poem of 1817.

ministers and elders of the whole Synod. *Their* evidence must certainly be conclusive.

Again, in contradiction to his second assertion, I did not afterwards swallow my protest, but have more than once since that period taken it up and acted upon it. When I protested, my intention was to show that I then was the foe of classification, even modified as it had been by the efforts of those with whom I acted. And so far have I been from changing my sentiments and becoming the friend of classification, that I was one of the MAJORITY of Synod who petitioned the late chief governor to have the system abolished.

But perhaps some are ready to ask me, Did not my protest bind me to withdraw from the Synod and reject its bounty? I answer by referring you to the conduct of any well-regulated assembly. For instance, a protest entered by a member of congress in America, or a member of Parliament in England, goes merely to show the protester's disapprobation of the law enacted, but not a separation from the enacting assembly or rebellion against its laws. So having, both in and out of Synod, used every effort in my power against the law of classification, I protested to show future generations my decided disapprobation of that system; but no member of Synod supposed that my protest bound me to separate from the Synod or reject its emoluments. And I now confidently assert that I never pledged myself either to separate from the one or reject the other. . . . While I thus vindicate my character from the accusation of calumny, I am far from coming forward as the advocate of classification. Let its friends defend their own system. I still retain my former wish to see it totally abolished. Nay, I will go further, and say that I am no advocate either for Establishments or royal gifts, especially Establishments professedly intolerant.

But when we consider that the R. D. received by the Synod is but a mite compared with the civil list, that the Catholics receive a like sum for the education of their clergy, that the Covenanting clergy receive their education at a college supported by the King's bounty, that the Seceders receive a royal bounty, that the emoluments of a single dignitary in another church exceed the bounty of the whole Synod, that on a general assessment of the empire, the Synod's bounty would not much exceed the *half of half a farthing* to each individual, that a double sum of the public money is annually expended on a poorhouse or an hospital—reflecting thus, are we not surprised to hear the *factionous* sound the *robbery-horn*, whilst they themselves are sharers in the plunder?

Churches now as of old, overlooking their own imperfections, may boast of themselves and despise others. Permit me, however, humbly to express a hope that the faith of the Synod of Ulster is the faith of the Gospel, and that its worship corresponds with the worship of a true Church. I do not wish to give the

Synod a character which it does not deserve ; but show me the Church whose faith, whose worship, and whose moral and civil conduct taken together excel the Synod of Ulster, and convince my understanding of its superiority, and I will not only join *that* Church, but call upon you to do so likewise.—*Letter*, pp. 2-6.

#### POLITICS OF THE SYNOD.

In the Scripture politics of the Synod there are no doubt to be found now, as in the ages that are past, shades of difference. Men's minds differ as their faces. But, in general, the Whig principles of their ancestors in Ulster characterise the Synod. They have still maintained a virtuous independence in the election of their clergy, and in the government and discipline of their own Church, whilst they cultivate a spirit of tolerance to all who differ from them in opinion. Many of its members, I am sure, deprecate and hold in abhorrence all tests tending to cramp religious liberty or infringe on the rights of conscience. National and legislative tests they reject, and are convinced that no king, no lord, no commoner has a right to interfere between a man and his God in matters of religious communion ; and they look forward with anxious solicitude to the approaching day when all penal laws restrictive of religion shall cease, and every man have leave to worship his God in the way he believes most agreeable to His will, without any to molest or make him afraid.—*Letter*, pp. 7, 8.

## CHAPTER XCIV.

JAMES PORTER (1787—1798),

MINISTER AT GREYABBEY, COUNTY DOWN.

1. *Billy Bluff and Squire Firebrand*, or a Sample of the Times. [Five Letters which originally appeared in the *Northern Star* of 1796.] *Belfast*, 1796. M. C. D.
2. *Sydney's Letters to the Marquis of Downshire*. Published in the *Northern Star*. 1797.
3. *Wind and Weather*. A Sermon on the late Providential Storm which dispersed the French Fleet off Bantry Bay, preached to the Congregation of Greyabbey on Thursday, February 16, 1797, being the Fast Day appointed by Government for Thanksgiving. 12mo, pp. 24. [Eph. ii. 2.] 2d edition. *Belfast*, 1797. A. C. B.

MR. PORTER was a native of Ballindreat, in the County Donegal. He studied at Glasgow, and succeeded Dr. Stephenson as minister of Greyabbey in County Down, where he was ordained on the 31st of July, 1787.

In 1780 he married Miss Anne Knox, by whom he had two sons, Alexander and James, and six daughters. Seven of his children were alive at their father's death.

Mr. Porter was a very accomplished man, of literary and scientific tastes, as well as of natural talents and attainments much beyond what was common in his time. His conscious intellectual superiority made him look with some degree of contempt on the ignorant and bigoted squirearchy of the Ards; and his knowledge of politics and history made him rather restless under the high-handed rule of the statesmen of that time, whose policy was directed more to Continental affairs than to internal administration. About 1794 he began, unfortunately

for himself, to give his time and thought to Irish politics. He was strongly in favour of parliamentary reform and of Catholic emancipation ; while the recent revolutions in America and France led him to believe, that the political reforms which he desired were to be obtained by some popular movement in the country, rather than by moral suasion brought to bear upon the nation and its rulers.

In the end of the last century the country gentlemen of the County Down carried matters with a high hand over the populace ; the local administration of the law was in their hands, and every man who ran across their wishes in the slightest manner was set down as disaffected to Government, and treated as one suspected of disloyalty and treason. Base sycophants and tale-bearers were always found in sufficient numbers to carry stories to the squire, and so to fan the flame. It was this state of things which Mr. Porter set himself to satirize and to expose in his first publication, entitled *Billy Bluff and Squire Firebrand*. Bluff is a spy whom Firebrand has in his employment, and whose office it is to carry to his master all the news of the parish, and especially to report the conduct and conversation of every suspected person. The ignorant bigotry of the master and the base sycophancy of the man, are very humorously touched off. The news carried to the squire is very commonplace intelligence indeed, but in everything the far-sighted Dogberry sees evidence of a plot, and in the most ordinary conversation of the suspected person finds manifest proof of some deep-laid conspiracy against the throne and the Church. There can be no harm in saying now, what was then well known, that under the character of Lord Mountmumble we have the Earl of Londonderry (father of Lord Castlereagh) ; Squire Firebrand was his agent, the Rev. John Cleland ; and Billy Bluff was some low farmer in the neighbourhood, who purchased for himself the great man's favour by plying the ignoble trade of spy and informer. The various characters are hit off in a very amusing way ; but the whole is interlarded with oaths, which may have been necessary to make the



picture true and natural, but which detract somewhat from the pleasure that a grave and sober reader feels in the perusal. All such writing, in order to strike the imagination with effect, must have a little exaggeration in it, and this tract is no exception; but in these pages of a small pamphlet there is, on the whole, a truer sketch of country life in Ireland in the last decade of the eighteenth century than in many volumes each ten times its size. So popular was the little work with the people, that some could repeat long passages of it; but Lord Londonderry, recognising perhaps his own likeness, was highly offended, and, with less magnanimity than might be expected, never forgave Porter for the crime of writing *Billy Bluff*. The letters were originally printed in the *Northern Star*, the organ of the United Irishmen in Belfast; but they were immediately reissued in a pamphlet form that same year. They have been since reprinted frequently—in 1816, in 1840, and again in 1868. Their amusing caricature of the relationship of landlord and tenant and of Dogberry justice in country districts, seems to have struck the fancy of the peasantry, and *Billy Bluff* is still a popular pamphlet in the cottages of Ulster.

In February 1797, Mr. Porter published in the *Northern Star* a series of letters on political subjects signed "Sydney," and addressed to the Marquis of Downshire. They contained a violent attack on the Right Hon. William Pitt, in which he is charged with bringing the country and constitution to the verge of destruction. The subject is the same, and the invective is as fierce, as that of Coleridge's celebrated war eclogue entitled *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*, written in the preceding year:—

"*Slaughter*. He came by stealth, and unlocked my den,  
And I have drunk the blood since then  
Of thrice three hundred thousand men.

*Fire and Famine*. Who bade you do it?

*Slaughter*. The same! the same!

*Letters four do form his name*.

He let me loose, and cried, 'Halloo!'

To him alone the praise is due!"

It was a less powerful and effective weapon which Porter wielded, but it was aimed at the same object and discharged with the same end. Madden says that "in some of these letters the style is inflated, the sentiments exaggerated; but . . . they are far from mediocrity in point of literary merit; and if that violence of language, which was the foolish fashion of the day, had been a little moderated, the thoughts which are clothed in it would have suffered no injury." A copious extract from these letters may be seen in Madden's *United Irishmen*.

While the *Letters of Sydney* were passing through the press, Mr. Porter issued another publication in the shape of "A Sermon preached to the Congregation of Greyabbey on Thursday, February 16th, the day appointed for a General Fast." In the end of 1796, at a time when England and France were at war, a French fleet threatened to throw an army on the shores of Ireland, and to head the nation in an insurrection against England. Fortunately this fleet, when off Bantry Bay, was dispersed in a storm, and consequently failed in its object. At the general fast which was held early in the following year reference was made to this providential deliverance, and on that occasion Mr. Porter preached the sermon which, in its second edition, was issued with the quaint title *Wind and Weather*. He shows in this discourse the danger which would have resulted had not the fleet been dispersed by the interposition of Divine Providence; that as no armament of ours had averted, so no wisdom of ours could avert, the catastrophe certain in such a case; and that we should be wise in time, seeing that some day the fleet might return, and we might be found unprovided with a storm to scatter it and to keep it from our shores. "The whole," says Madden, with great justice, "is in a strain of grave sarcasm and ironical loyalty, better suited for the pages of *Billy Bluff* than for the place where it was uttered."

It does not appear that Porter was ever a sworn member of the Society of United Irishmen, but he sympathised in the object which the society proposed,

and he aided it with his pen. He does not appear to have been present at any skirmish, or to have been ever found in arms against Government; the utmost that he had ever done was to write *Billy Bluff*, and to go through the country spreading revolutionary principles while he gave lectures on natural philosophy and performed experiments with his tiny electric battery and his little Montgolfier balloons. There is no good evidence that he ever committed any overt act of rebellion. A vile wretch, however, was found to swear that Mr. Porter was present when a small party of insurgents intercepted the mail from Belfast to Saintfield, and ransacked it in search of some important despatches between the 9th and 11th of June 1798. He was forthwith arrested on this charge and tried by court-martial at Newtownards. The person in charge of the mail failed to identify the prisoner, and the only thing against him was the oath of the informer, who alleged that he was present when the act was committed. Mr. Porter's defence was able and impressive. He utterly denied the charge, pronounced the evidence given against him to be false; that his only offence was his liberal opinions, and that these opinions were never concealed, but were at all times, as they were then, openly avowed. He was sentenced to die, and an order was given for his immediate execution.

"In the brief interval between those events," says Madden, "Porter's wife proceeded to Mount-Stewart, to implore the merciful interference of Lord Londonderry, the neighbour and formerly intimate acquaintance of her husband. She had been informed by the authorities at Newtownards that Lord Londonderry alone had the power of suspending his execution. Mrs. Porter succeeded in obtaining an interview with the ladies at Mount-Stewart, where he had been at one period a frequent and welcome guest. Some of the daughters of his Lordship had frequently attended his lectures on elementary science, and delighted, as well they might do, in the society of such a man. They were deeply affected at the intelligence of his fate; and one of the young ladies, then in

wretched health, and a few months later in the grave, undertook the task of soliciting her father to interfere for the preservation of Mr. Porter's life. The poor young lady returned to Mrs. Porter bathed in tears; her father had refused to listen to her entreaties, and no further hope remained.

"His wife was permitted to see him on her return from her unsuccessful mission. After they had remained together for some time the order came for his execution. He was informed that part of his sentence, which directed the mutilation of his remains, would be remitted, and the latter would be given up to his family. Porter said to his wife, 'Then, my dear, I shall lie at home to-night.' That wretched wife attended him to the place of execution, and was removed from it in a state of distraction.

"The place chosen for his execution was selected, in a spirit of fiendish cruelty, unnecessarily wanton, and outrageous to the feelings of the family and the congregation of the unfortunate Christian minister. They erected a temporary scaffold on the green midway between his dwelling-house and his place of worship, close to the pathway which led from the one to the other, and in the full view of both." The date of his execution was the 2d of July. "On a low flat tombstone," says Dr. Montgomery, "which covers the place of his repose, I have read the following inscription:— 'Sacred to the memory of the Rev. James Porter, who departed this life July 2d, 1798.'" His true epitaph would have been, *Murdered by martial law for the crime of writing "Billy Bluff."*

Dr. Montgomery further describes him as a "handsome man, possessing respectable talents and an agreeable address," and very popular in his district. At his death, his family were left in poverty. "The only passion he indulged in that crippled his resources was the purchase of books and apparatus for experiments in natural philosophy. His library was very extensive, and his scientific instruments and objects connected with the illustration of natural philosophy were far superior

to any of the kind which at that day were known in his part of Ireland. He was on intimate terms with all the nobility and gentry of his neighbourhood, till politics sundered the bonds of society; and he maintained his position amongst all as a gentleman and a scholar without any approach to servility, but, on the contrary, with the bearing of a man who was conscious of what was due to himself and to his pursuits. It is evident, from the way in which his old friends speak of him, that his qualities were calculated to gain the friendship of men who had some knowledge of their fellows, and ample opportunity of discriminating between the pretensions to worth and the possession of it. In his habits he was strictly temperate; in his political principles, a zealous advocate of civil and religious liberty."

One of Mr. Porter's daughters married W. D. Henderson, Esq., a respectable merchant of Belfast; another, the Rev. Andrew Goudy of Ballywalter, by whom she became mother of Dr. Alexander Porter Goudy of Strabane, one of the most able and eminent ministers that ever adorned the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. His two sons, James and Alexander, removed to America. James rose to be Attorney-General of the State of Louisiana. Alexander became a judge, and for a long time represented Louisiana in the Senate of the United States. Orphaned in that bloody time, the children of an honest and upright, though we must believe misguided, man, were not forsaken by that God who is the father of the fatherless and the husband of the widow.\*

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#### BILLY BLUFF AND THE SQUIRE.

By your leave, Mr. Editor, if you please, a corner in your paper for this my letter—the first that ever I wrote for print, and probably will be the last. I am in danger of being hanged, or put in gaol, perhaps both. I want your advice like an honest man.

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\* MS. *Minutes of Synod*: Madden's *United Irishmen*, 3d series, vol. i. p. 360: *Irish Unitarian Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 331.



God help us ! what is the world going to come to at last ? I'll tell the whole affair, and the cause of it. Billy Bluff, my neighbour, was up yesterday at the Squire's with his duty-hens.

"Well, Billy, what news ?" says the Squire.

"T—th, sir, plenty o' news, but none very good," says Billy.

"What's your neighbour R. (meaning me) about now ?"

"Why, please your honour, he's at the old cut—railing against the war, against the tithes, and against game laws, and he's still reading at the newspapers."

"He is a d——d villain, and must be laid fast, by G—— ; but what more do you know of him, Billy ?"

"Why, bad enough, an' please your honour. Him and the Popish priest drank together last market-day till all was blue again with them ; they shaked hands, so they did, drank toasts, and sung songs."

"Pretty work, by h—— ; did you overhear them ?"

"Ah ! that I did so, and listened like a pig."

"What were the toasts ?"

"First, the priest drank *Prosperity to Old Ireland*, and"—

"Stop, Billy ; the toast is infamous ; the word *Old* never was and never ought to be applied to any country but England ; and he who would apply it to Ireland is a rebel, and ought to be hanged !"

"He ought, an' please your honour, as round as a hoop."

"Well, what toast did the villain R. drink ?"

"He drank *Union and Peace to the People of Ireland*."

"Worse and worse, Billy, a d—— deal worse ; he who wishes union wishes ruin to the country ; I say ruin to the Government, and that is ruin to the country. Union, forsooth ! that is, what never was, and what never must prevail in this country ; and, as to peace, 'tis flying in the face of government to speak of it ; the d——l send the ruffians peace till their betters choose to give it to them !"

"Then, sir, the priest drank, here's *Every man his own road to Heaven* !"

"That, Billy, is a toast that no man would drink but a republican and sinner ; for it supposes all men to be on an equality before God, and supposes that a man may go to heaven without being of the Established Church, which is impossible."

"God bless your honour ! I know that, and that is the reason I turned to Church. Then the toast R. gave was, *Liberty to those who dare contend for it* !"

"Impudent scoundrel ! The signal of rebellion, anarchy, and confusion : to *contend* implies opposition ; opposition implies resistance ; resistance implies war—war against the established orders—war against man and the Godhead, as the great Grattan expressed it ; but, tell me, what other toasts did they drink ?"

"Several that I can't mind just now."

"Did they drink success to the French ?"

"No, an' please your honour, but they drank success to the righteous."

"That is near as bad ; did they drink *No more kings ?*"

"They did, and shook hands upon it ; my neighbour R. gave that toast—No more kings, said he, *No more kings—to France.*"

"To France, Billy ? The villains had another meaning. Aye, aye, they had another meaning. I know what the hypocritical villains meant, I know it perfectly ; d—— to my s—— but they shall both be hanged !"

"Certainly, please your honour, and the sooner the better."

"What songs did they sing ?"

"Why, the priest sang *Patrick's Day in the Morning*, and then R. sang *Paddy Thwack*, and then the priest sang *Grauny Wail*, and then R. sang *O for a Union of Parties !*"

"D—— Union, and d—— *Grauny Wail* and *Paddy Thwack* and *Patrick's Day in the Morning !* they are all impudent national seditious songs. What more did you hear ?"

"Please your honour, after the songs, they began to talk about religion, and so I came off and left them."

"You have done very well, Billy, very well ; go to the kitchen, and I'll order you a drink of small beer. See and get me more news, and I'll give you a job at the roads next summer."

"God prosper your honour !"

"But, Billy, you'll take care and be ready to swear when called on ?"

"Egad ! a pretty story, an' please your honour, if I could not swear what I would say, or what your honour would please !"

Now, Mr. Editor, all this I had from the butler, who is an honest fellow, though a Catholic ; he told me through friendship to the priest, for fear of the worst, as he called it. And although Bluff told some truth, he did not tell all the truth, for we drank several loyal toasts. We drank *The King*, *Mr. Pitt*, the *Lord of the Manor*, and many others, and we sung several good loyal songs. But the religious conversation is what I must tell you myself. When we got a glass, I thought of touching the priest upon points. We had a tolerable bout on't. He made use of several hard words ; not one of them did I understand, nor do I remember any of them but two, because he came over these two more than twenty times. "What is the best religion ?" said I. "*Bonus homo*," said he. "What is your creed ?" said I. "*Bonus homo*," said he again. "What is it to be one of the elect ?" said I. "*Bonus homo*," said he. "What is your opinion of the Pope ?" said I ; "can he send anybody he pleases to heaven ?" "He neither can nor will," said he, "send anybody to heaven but a *Bonus homo*." "Oh, then," said I, "*Bonus homo* means Popery, I suppose ?" He smiled and said, "It means just *Bonus homo*, and neither more nor less."

Off went I the next day to our minister, told him all the conversation, and how much I was puzzled about *Bonus homo*. He

said that the priest was quite right in everything he said, except that the creed was too short—quite too short to be adopted in any Christian country. “Well but, if you please, what is the plain meaning of *Bonus homo*?” “Why, the literal meaning of *Bonus homo* is a good man.” “Ma sha, fol-de-lol,” said I, with a caper, “if that be the case, *we are all one in the Latin.*”

So, Mr. Editor, good-bye to you; *Bonus homo* is the creed for me.

A PRESBYTERIAN.

*N.B.*—Tell me whether you think I will be prosecuted for the company I kept with the priest.

*P.S.*—The Squire observed to Bluff that the shaking hands between me and the priest was worse than all the rest put together. —*First Letter in Northern Star, May 21, 1796.*

## CHAPTER XCV.

JOHN SHERRARD (1774—1829),

MINISTER OF TULLYLISH.

1. A *Few Plain Observations* on the Nature, Causes, and Fatal Consequences of Wilful Murder. A Sermon preached to the Congregation of Tullylish and Donacloney, December 4, 1796, being the second Sabbath after these and several other neighbouring parishes were proclaimed by Government to be in a state of disturbance. [Gen. ix. 6.] pp. 24. *Belfast*, 1796.
2. A *Few Observations* on the Nature and Tendency of the Changes lately proposed to be made in the Constitution of the Protestant Dissenting Church, showing how far these changes, if adopted, are likely to affect the honour, peace, and prosperity of that Church, and the only constitutional way of preventing these bad effects pointed out. pp. 48. *Belfast*, 1803.  
A. C. B.

MR. SHERRARD was ordained at Tullylish on the 8th of November, 1774, as successor to the Rev. Samuel Morell, who was shot accidentally by the Hearts of Oak in 1772.

The disturbed state of the province at the close of the last century, as evidenced by various instances of intimidation, violence, robbery, and murder, induced Government to take some very active measures for the repression of crime. In 1796 when Donacloney and some neighbouring parishes were proclaimed, Mr. Sherrard published a sermon on murder, with the view of exercising healthful moral influence, and producing a better spirit among the population.

At the meeting of the Synod of Ulster, held in Lurgan, on the 24th of June, 1800, Mr. Black of Derry,

agent for the Regium Donum, informed the Committee of Overtures that Lord Castlereagh had told him that "it was the intention of His Majesty's Ministers to make a provision for the Dissenting clergy on terms different from those on which the present Regium Donum was paid them." The Synod appointed a committee, consisting of their Moderator Mr. Bankhead, Mr. Black, and Dr. Little of Killeleagh, to negotiate with Government on the subject. At a special meeting of Synod held at Lurgan, on the 8th of October following, this committee reported. It was agreed to dissolve the committee and to summon another meeting of Synod, when an official statement of the new plan should be submitted; and it was further agreed that the Moderator should write to Lord Castlereagh, requesting him to use his influence to have the increased grant distributed in the old way. The letter of Mr. Bankhead, written from Lurgan on the day of the Synod's meeting, may still be seen in the *Castlereagh Correspondence* (vol. iii. p. 388).

Mr. Sherrard shared in the strong objections entertained by the majority of his brethren, and, a few days after the special meeting of Synod, thought it necessary to support the representation of the Moderator by writing a letter dated "Lamb's Island, October 13, 1800," in which he also remonstrated strongly against the proposed system of endowment. Lord Castlereagh, however, had made up his mind to two things; *first*, to do the Presbyterian ministers a kindness by giving them a greatly increased grant, and, *second*, to diminish their gratitude for the kindness by accompanying it with such conditions as would make its acceptance a discomfort and humiliation to many of them. To him it seemed a grand stroke of State policy to bind the whole Presbyterian body by bonds of interest to the State, and at the same time to sow among the ministers themselves the seeds of jealousy and disunion. The enlarged endowment was to accomplish the one object; the classification principle was to accomplish the other. The scheme came into practical operation for the first time in 1803.



It was not to the increase of endowment, but to the principle of classification, that Mr. Sherrard was opposed. In a pamphlet published in 1803, he states his objections to it at length. He thought that it impinged somewhat inconveniently on three Presbyterian principles—the headship of Christ, the popular election of church officers, and the parity of ministers; while the acceptance of it by the ministers would lower their public character, form a cause of jealousy and strife among themselves, promote division in the Synod, and diminish the confidence of the people in their teachers. If the proposed plan had necessarily involved all these evils, it might have been the duty of the Synod to decline it. If Mr. Sherrard thought it did, it might have been his duty to decline it. But as his objection to the principle did not assume this extreme form, and as those who bestow a gift have an undoubted right to prescribe the terms, the only question in reality before the Synod was to accept or to decline; and as Mr. Sherrard, any more than others, did not intend to decline, his wisdom would have been to say little and to publish less on the subject. The denunciations of classification by ministers who afterwards submitted and accepted the increase, were turned against them by opponents, and were used to hurt them in the estimation of their own people.

The practice of classification was rigidly carried out by the Government for thirty-five years, and only ended by the concession of equalisation in 1838. It would be difficult now to say what real gains it ever brought to the State, and what real evils it ever wrought to the Church; so that if both parties could have looked into futurity and have seen the real results, the probability is that Government would not have been so stiffly uncompliant nor the Synod so pertinacious. The Synod acted on the whole discreetly; they remonstrated against a principle with which they were dissatisfied; but as it was a mere arrangement adopted by Government to guide themselves in the distribution of a public grant, it only affected ministers in regard to their worldly

position, and had no bearing on the doctrine, government, or worship of the Church. We cannot see, however, that it was the duty of the Synod to do more than to remonstrate. Appeals to the public, such as those made by Mr. Sherrard and by Mr. Henry, were in the circumstances alike injudicious and useless.

A dispute between Mr. Sherrard and some of his people came before the Synod of 1811, and resulted in leave being given to the congregation to choose a successor, which was, soon afterwards done. He survived his resignation for a considerable time. His death occurred on the 18th of June, 1829.

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#### CLASSIFICATION OF CONGREGATIONS.

From this brief, plain, and candid review of the general plan, it will be easy for every man concerned to see that it infringes more or less upon every one of the three great and fundamental principles upon which our Church always has, and I trust ever will stand, and, as far as I am able to judge, overturns two of them altogether.

In the first place, every one must see that in place of Christ, as our sole head and lawgiver, we have, or are about to have, the civil magistrate for our head, and his laws in several important respects for our direction. Now let me here ask, what occasion for our dissent from the Established Church, if the very thing which caused that dissent be now submitted to and received by us? Why have Dissenters for ages past submitted to many severe penal laws, or why do they still submit to those disabilities of holding civil offices under Government, for which many of them are as well qualified as any other denomination of his Majesty's subjects? Was it not because that from a principle of conscience they could submit to no head, to no lawgiver, but to Him whom God hath invested with that high trust, honour, and authority alone?

In the second place, must not every one see that, either by selfish motives or the least whisper of malevolence, the character of the man chosen by the people may be blasted, his ordination prevented, his prospects for life ruined, and the right of the people who had called him reduced to a mere unsubstantial and unavailing shadow?

In the third, must not every one see that instead of standing upon that beautiful plan of equality of rank, authority, and

influence in the Church and kingdom of Christ, laid down and enjoined upon us by Him whom we acknowledge to be our sole lawgiver, and upon which Presbyterian ministers have ever stood, we are about to stand upon a plan of inequality of rank, authority, and influence, laid down and arranged by our civil government? In a word, must not every one see that these changes go to dethrone the true King and Head of His Church, to give up that liberty whereby He has made His followers free, to overturn the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and to substitute in its place a complete human establishment. I say the man who does not see and acknowledge all this, must give reason to suspect either the weakness of his head, or the purity of those motives which influence and govern the heart.—*A Few Observations*, pp. 20-22.

## CHAPTER XCVI.

JAMES HORNER, D.D. (1791—1843),

MINISTER AT DUBLIN.

1. *Sermon on the Sabbath.* 1797.
2. *Charity Sermon* at Mary's Abbey.
3. *A Charge* delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Baird at Stratford-on-Slaney, September 24, 1811.
4. *The Destination of Man after Death.* A Sermon occasioned by the death of the late Benjamin M'Dowell, D.D., Senior Minister of the Scots Church, Mary's Abbey, Dublin. [Eccles. xii. 7.] pp. 32. *Dublin*, 1825.

DR. HORNER was a native of the district lying between Dungiven and Limavady, in the County Londonderry. He studied at Glasgow, and was in due time licensed by the Presbytery of Route.

On the 4th of November, 1791, he was ordained as colleague to Dr. M'Dowell of Mary's Abbey, Dublin, where his ministry was long and successful.

In 1804 the Synod of Ulster elected him to the office of Moderator. When retiring from office he preached on Titus ii. 15; but it does not appear that his Synodical sermon was ever published. But in 1811 he delivered a charge at the ordination of Rev. John Baird, who in that year was settled at Stratford-on-Slaney, and this charge was given to the press.

In 1825 Mr. Horner was called upon to preach the funeral sermon of his venerable friend and colleague, Dr. M'Dowell. The text was Ecclesiastes xii. 7.

In 1831 Mr. Horner obtained the degree of Doctor in Divinity. He took an active part in the establish-

ment of the Home Mission, and was much consulted and employed in the attempt to extend the Presbyterian Church in the South of Ireland.

He survived the union of the Synods in 1840, but at that time was so far advanced in years as to be unable to take a prominent part in the public business of the Church. While health permitted he never failed to take an interest in ecclesiastical affairs, and to attend Synod with diligence, while he was noted among his brethren for personal tact and for shrewdness of character. Persons still alive, who knew him in old age, speak of him as "a tall, well-built, and handsome old gentleman, who was understood to possess a large share of good common sense, and who was much employed in the transaction of Synodical business."

Dr. Horner died on the 16th of January, 1843. He was a man of sound judgment, and of kind and genial spirit. His grandson, Dr. M'Dowell, is at present Professor of Anatomy in Trinity College, Dublin.



## CHAPTER XCVII.

GEORGE HAMILTON (1794—1803),

MINISTER AT ARMAGH (SECOND CONGREGATION).

*The Great Necessity of Itinerant Preaching.* A Sermon delivered in the new Meeting-house of Armagh, at the formation of the Evangelical Society of Ulster, on Wednesday, 10th of October, 1798. With a short Introductory Memorial respecting the establishment and first attempt of that Society. [Luke xiv. 23.] 8vo, pp. xvii. and 36. *Armagh*, 1798. A. C. B.

THE Secession Congregation, now the Second Congregation of Armagh, was founded in 1785. Its first stated minister was George Hamilton, who seems to have been settled there about 1794.

He founded the Irish Evangelical Society, an organisation formed for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to that portion of the people of Ireland lying beyond the various churches. The sermon preached at the foundation of the Society, on the text Luke xiv. 23, was subsequently published. It is an earnest evangelical discourse, in which he shows that Gospel compulsion is moral in its nature, that the end it proposes to attain is conversion, and that there are strong arguments why numbers should go forth in quest of wandering sinners, and compel them to come in. He concludes with the enforcement of suitable lessons.

In 1803 the Secession Synod condemned the principles on which this new organisation was based, whereupon Mr. Hamilton withdrew from their fellowship, and became an Independent. The Society that he founded passed over with its founder, and became practically an

organisation carried on by Independents. The Seceding congregation in Armagh was much weakened by the withdrawal of a number of its members, who followed their pastor.

Mr. Hamilton afterwards became pastor of an Independent church at Carrickfergus in November, 1816; but he died of typhus fever in the following year, and was buried in Carrickfergus. His son is Sir James Hamilton, for many years Chairman of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.\*

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#### ORIGIN OF THE IRISH EVANGELICAL SOCIETY.

A few ministers and laymen being assembled at Armagh on a sacramental occasion, the author of the following sermon proposed, as matter of solemn deliberation, on Monday evening, this question—"Is there anything practicable by us in order to our more extensive usefulness in spreading the glorious Gospel?" After prayer and much serious conversation on the subject, it was judged proper to call a meeting, to be held at Armagh, on the 10th of October next, and that in the meantime a circular letter be prepared, in order to be addressed to evangelical ministers and private Christians of every denomination, requesting their attendance. A copy of the circular letter is here inserted. . . .

(Signed) WM. HENRY.  
DAVID HOLMES.  
LEWIS BROWN.  
JOHN LOWRY.  
GEO. HAMILTON.

To this address several answers were received of a very encouraging and satisfactory nature. At length the day appointed arrived; and although there happened a great fall of rain, still a considerable number of people, with about thirteen ministers of four different denominations, had the pleasure of assembling on the occasion. The public worship was conducted in the following manner. The Rev. George Maunsel, Rector of Drumcree, began with reading the first chapter of Haggai, and then gave out the latter part of the 90th Psalm. The Rev. Thomas Campbell, pastor of the Antiburgher Congregation of Ahorey, then prayed; after which, and the singing of a few verses of the 72d Psalm, the following discourse was delivered. A part of the 132d Psalm

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\* Stuart's *Armagh*, p. 498: Killen's *History*: Rev. Mr. Graham, in *Northern Whig*, July 1, 1878.

was then sung, and the Rev. William Henry of Tassagh having prayed, and a select portion of the 102d Psalm (long measure) having been sung, the congregation was dismissed with the usual benediction.

Mr. Maunsel was then called to the chair, and prayer being offered up, the circular letter calling the meeting was read; and after some remarks respecting the desirableness of the object in view, it was proposed that the minsters and brethren now convened do signify their desire to form themselves into a Society, for the purposes already stated, by a solemn lifting up of their hands. The unanimous wish of the meeting being thus ascertained, Mr. Hamilton proceeded, according to appointment, to read over the sketch of a plan previously digested. A committee of five persons was then appointed, who having retired into the vestry, made some little alterations on the plan proposed, expressed their approbation, and returned it to the examination of the meeting. It was then read a second time, discussed article by article, and with a few corrections unanimously adopted.

The attention of the meeting was now directed to the choice of a committee, a treasurer, and a secretary. Mr. Samuel Carson of Armagh was immediately nominated as treasurer, and the Rev. George Hamilton as secretary: with this designation the meeting unanimously concurred. The following gentlemen were then chosen as members of committee:—The Rev. Messrs. Maunsel, Henry, Reed, Campbell, and Messrs. Jackson, Craig, Kinlay, Nehemiah Carson, Gordon, and Jones. A subscription book was then opened, and the thanks of the meeting being voted to Mr. Maunsel for his very proper attention to the business of the day, the whole was concluded with prayer by the Rev. W. B. Mathias. —*Itinerant Preaching, Introductory Memorial*, pp. v-xi.

## CHAPTER XCVIII.

*JOHN GLENDY, D.D. (1778—1798),*

MINISTER OF MAGHERA.

An *Oration* on the Death of Lieutenant-General George Washington, composed on the special request of the Commandant and his brother Officers of the Cantonment in the Vicinity, and delivered at Staunton on the 22d day of February, 1800. [Reprinted, 8vo, pp. 31, *Baltimore*, 1835.—T. W.]

JOHN GLENDY was born near Londonderry on the 24th of June, 1755. He received his education at the University of Glasgow. In 1776 and the year following he was passing through his trial sermons before the Presbytery of Derry. He was licensed to preach the Gospel in April, 1777.

On the 19th of May, 1778, a deputation from Maghera, consisting of Messrs. Alexander Clark and William Paterson, appeared before the Presbytery, bringing a unanimous call for Mr. Glendy, and asking to have his settlement among them “expedited.” He accepted the call, and was ordained on the 16th of December in the same year.

The old Presbyterian church of Maghera stood upon the Fair Hill. The building of a new edifice on the présent site, in 1785, was among the first duties which engaged the attention of the young minister ; but afterwards he was unfortunately induced to participate in less innocent avocations. He sympathised warmly in the political movements of the United Irishmen. Beyond a foolish march of the country people, armed with guns and other weapons, into town, of which they held pos-

session for some four-and-twenty hours, the insurrection at Maghera amounted literally to nothing: no battle, not even a skirmish, was fought; and, without hurting any person or doing any damage, the people, when they had time to reflect, saw their folly, separated, and went home. A day or two after, a band of soldiers and yeomanry marched into town, and proceeded to inflict on the neighbourhood summary vengeance. They took up their quarters inside the Presbyterian church, and burned everything in it except the Bible. They sentenced by court-martial, hanged, and beheaded two persons, one of them a respectable farmer, named Walter Graham, another an unoffending Covenanter in the town, named Cuddy, who was guilty of nothing except making an unseasonable jest. They burned the dwelling-houses of such of the country people as were suspected to be ringleaders, and subjected the whole neighbourhood to a severe and unnecessary chastisement. Mr. Glendy was one of those whose houses were burned, and he himself with some difficulty escaped to the United States. He sailed in an old, unseaworthy ship, and after a long and dangerous passage landed at Norfolk, Virginia.

For some years he lived at Staunton in Virginia, and it was there that he delivered his *Oration* upon Washington—"a florid and eloquent panegyric upon the celebrated general and patriot."

In 1803 the second Presbyterian church in Baltimore was built for Mr. Glendy, and he became minister of a congregation which in later times has done itself honour by associating with itself the name of Breckenridge. Here Mrs. Glendy, originally Miss Eliza Cresswell of Derry, who had never thoroughly recovered the alarm of the Irish rebellion and the sufferings of the Atlantic passage, died on the 13th of June, 1804.

In 1806 Mr. Glendy was chosen chaplain to the House of Representatives, and in 1815 and 1816 he filled a similar office in the Senate of the United States. He numbered among his personal friends the leading American statesmen of his time—Jefferson, Monroe, Madison and John Quincy Adams.



The University of Maryland conferred upon him in 1822 the degree of D.D., and he held the pastorate down till 1826, when Dr. John Breckenridge became his assistant. Two years before his death he went to reside in Philadelphia, and died there on the 4th of October, 1832. The following description of him, written by one of his elders, is given by Dr. Sprague:—

“He was singularly neat, even elegant, in his dress. His hair was thrown into artificial curls, and powdered as white as the snows of Mont Blanc. His complexion was pale, his eyes intensely blue, his gesticulation animated and graceful, but somewhat profuse. He read the hymn with an eyeglass, but the Scriptures with spectacles; and in due time dashed off into his discourse with a rapidity of utterance which would have distinguished the King of Pylos, or John C. Calhoun. The sermon was a perfect torrent of Irish eloquence, and much more like Philips than Grattan. His voice was as sweet as the harp of David, but as unlike as possible to the horns that demolished the walls of Jericho. The whole impression produced by his preaching was at the time perfectly delightful, though I cannot say that it was very enduring.”

One of the sons of Dr. Glendy held the rank of Commodore in the navy of the United States.\*

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#### GENERAL WASHINGTON.

We detest the spirit of party; it is the bane of social life, it is the curse of dear communion. When the fell monster lifts his head, every loyal citizen, every gentleman, every considerate father of a family, indeed every man of common humanity, beholds it with horror.

In the vile brain of this pernicious monster, this murderer of social bliss, you may easily perceive the snakes of envy, the black features of malice, the yellow tinge of jealousy, and the distorted grinnings of disappointment. We early admired the speaking importance of one borrowed device in your national arms, to wit, this BUNDLE OF RODS. To break them when combined exceeds

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\* Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*: MS. *Minutes* of Derry Presbytery: and local tradition.

your power ; separate them, they are easily shivered. Who can resist American valour combined ? UNITED, you bid defiance to the universe ; SEPARATED, you might be easily crushed, and become the prey of every daring invader. On you I call, ye heroes, officers, and men, brave soldiers ! who fought and bled and triumphed with your dear General, at the tap of whose drum you marched quick through perils, toils, and blood to fame and glory ; when nakedness, cold, and hunger were your portion, his generous soul, his feeling heart, was agonised ; he bemoaned your fate with bowels of compassion. And shall Washington, the great and good, "born to save his country," die without regret ? Can you retain the memorials of his gallant spirit and withhold the tear of sorrow ? Happy America that gave him birth ! Her sons will be black ingrates, indeed, if ever his dear remembrance is erased from their hearts. Men of valour ! soldiers ! you will never be taught to cringe and stoop and lick the hand of tyranny ; your untamed, generous souls will dare to assert your independence and your freedom. My soul is up in arms against EVERY EUROPEAN FOE who shall dare to insult your great Republic, and we adore the memory of your patriotic brothers who nobly died in asserting the independence of your States and the liberty of your nation.—*Oration*, p. 22.

## CHAPTER XCIX.

THOMAS CUMING, M.A. (1784—1816),

MINISTER AT DROMORE, COUNTY DOWN, AND AT ARMAGH.

1. *The Duty of Preaching the Gospel to the Poor* explained and recommended. A Sermon preached before the General Synod of Ulster at their Annual Meeting in Lurgan, on Tuesday, the 25th of June, 1799. [Matt. xi. 5.] 8vo, pp. 40. Armagh, 1799. J. E. A.
2. *Funeral Sermon* for Rev. Samuel Livingstone of Clare. 1802.

MR. CUMING belonged to the neighbourhood of Ballymena, and was educated at Glasgow. He was a good classical scholar, and in the early part of his life acted as assistant to the Rev. William Mercer in conducting an Academy near Dublin.

In 1784, when Mr. Black removed to Derry, he succeeded him as minister of the Old Congregation of Dromore, in County Down.

On the 9th September, 1795, he resigned the charge of Dromore, and accepted a call to the First Congregation of Armagh, where he was installed on the 26th January immediately succeeding.

He was Moderator of the Synod of Ulster at its meeting in Lurgan, held on the 28th of August, in that eventful year, 1798. The address presented to Lord William Bentinck by the inhabitants of Armagh, on the occasion of his relinquishing the command of the troops in the neighbourhood, after the country had quieted down, was written by Mr. Cuming, and is an illustration at once of his classical style and correct literary taste.

His printed productions consist of two sermons only, one a Synodical sermon in 1799, the other a funeral sermon for his friend Mr. Livingstone of Clare. The Synodical sermon only has come my way. In it, after calling attention to the position in Scripture of the statement of the text, as the last member of a sublime climax, and furnishing an evidence of the Lord's Messiahship, he proceeds to account for the importance attached to this fact: it was the fulfilment of what the prophets said of Him; it was so extraordinary for a prophet to be sent to the poor and not to the great, thus showing that the soul of the peasant is of equal value with that of the prince; and to overcome their ignorance and prejudices against a pure and holy faith did not require less divine power than the performance of a miracle. He then goes on to explain the leading circumstances in the matter and manner of our Saviour's teaching. Christianity consists of plain facts and practical precepts, not of speculations. Its two distinguishing doctrines are pardon and the resurrection, appealing to men's hopes and fears, and making it better adapted for the reformation of the poor. The Divine Teacher restored piety, a regard for the invisible, to its deserved rank among the principles which regulate human conduct. He settled our duty on the broad basis of subjection to the authority of God; and all the virtues involved in piety were not only taught but strictly practised by Him. He was a successful preacher to the poor, because He stood on the same social level with them; He felt for their infirmities and wants; and because the consolations of Christianity are adapted to the suffering. Mr. Cuming concludes by an exhortation to the ministers to seek the spiritual and the temporal good of the poor.

"His style," says Dr. Stuart in his *Historical Memoirs*, "was clear and nervous, and it is to be regretted that he has left no other monument of his literary talents."

He was appointed Clerk of the Synod, and filled that office of trust and responsibility up till his death in 1816. The inscription on his tombstone in St. Mark's

Churchyard was written by his early and much-loved friend, the Rev. Andrew Craig, minister of Lisburn. It is as follows:—

“Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Thomas Cuming, Presbyterian minister, formerly of Dromore and latterly of Armagh. A warm heart, gentle manners, and a cheerful temper, the love of liberty, civil and religious, rational piety and integrity of life, endeared this excellent man to his family, to his congregation, and to an extensive circle of friends. Having faithfully discharged the duties of his sacred office, and animated with the hope of a happy immortality, he was called from this world on the 19th of August, 1816, in the thirty-third year of his ministry and fifty-ninth of his age.”

“He was,” says Dr. Stuart, “a man of sterling worth, an admirable preacher, and highly respected by the clergy and laity of all denominations.”

His son, Dr. Thomas Cuming of Armagh, has for many years sustained the character of an able physician and an upright man, and still survives (1879) to enjoy the evening of a long and useful life.

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#### PREACHING TO THE POOR.

Let us never by our indolence, by our indifference, or by our timidity, forfeit our claim to the high praise that in the Presbyterian Church the poor have the Gospel preached to them, and that its discipline and worship are fully adequate to incline the most numerous and useful portion of the human race to fulfil with propriety the unostentatious but often arduous duties of their humble station, and to guide them in the faithful discharge of every obligation which they owe to one another, to their country, and to their God, through the short and stormy passage of this life to a state of eternal and undisturbed order, serenity, and peace.

In thus training up the poor to the faithful discharge of their moral and religious duties, let us be animated by the most lively concern for their temporal and eternal welfare. Let us remember that the least of mankind are our fellow-creatures; that we owe them good-will not as a favour, but as a debt, and that we really



injure them if we refuse it. If they are in need of instruction (especially if Providence have committed the instruction of them to our care), it is our bounden duty to deliver it in such manner as to produce its proper effects. Let us consider the disadvantageous circumstances of the lower part of mankind for obtaining just and true notions of religion. How much time is spent in the necessary affairs of life ; how they toil from morning to evening, from day to day, and from year to year ; and how little time they have to employ in religious inquiries. Let us consider, further, that no rational being can be supposed to be willingly in a mistake or error ; that all men have a passion rather for truth than falsehood ; and that the poor, in particular, are commonly more open to conviction, much less wedded to systems and opinions, more anxious to receive information, and more ready to receive truth, than the higher ranks. These considerations will cause us, when we see erroneous, or superstitious, or licentious notions prevailing in the minds of the multitude, to cherish compassion towards them, and consider their instruction as our most sacred and indispensable duty. They will not fail to make us perform with cheerfulness and zeal the part which we have undertaken ; will enable us, by displaying the tenderest concern for their persons, and even their prejudices, to wean them from these very prejudices, and win them over to the love of truth and the practice of righteousness. This was the amiable, the condescending, the compassionate manner of teaching observed by our Saviour. Let us walk in His steps.—*Synodical Sermon*, pp. 37, 38.

## CHAPTER C.

*MINOR WRITERS OF THE PERIOD (1731-1800).*

To save space, we group into a separate chapter the less important writers of the time.

## 1. GEORGE CHERRY, M.A. (1725-1765), Minister at Clare.

The *Duty of a Minister* to be a Pattern of Good Works. A Sermon preached before the Particular Synod of Ardmagh, on Tuesday, July 27, 1736. 12mo, pp. 37. *Dublin*, 1736. [Tit. ii. 7.] M. C. D.

Mr. Cherry sympathised with the New Light ministers, and differed in this respect from his father-in-law, the Rev. Gilbert Kennedy of Tullylish (ch. xxxi.).

## 2. A MINISTER OF THE GENERAL SYNOD (1742).

A *New Creed Considered*; or, the Principles of the Belfast Society, alias the Presbytery of Antrim, lately published by the Reverend Dr. James Kirkpatrick, briefly examined. 12mo, pp. 24. *Dublin*, 1742. M. C. D.

This is a comment on the six propositions of the Presbytery of Antrim, printed by Kirkpatrick in the appendix to Duchal's funeral sermon for Abernethy. It led to Kirkpatrick's last work, the *Defence of Christian Liberty*.

## 3. THE PRESBYTERIES OF ARMAGH AND DROMORE (1743-1745).

1. A *Declaration* in favour of Truth and Christian Liberty. 1743.
2. An *Appeal* to the Impartial World. By the Presbytery of Armagh. 1744.

3. An *Answer* to the Appeal of the Presbytery of Armagh, wherein the proceedings of the Presbytery of Dromore are laid open to public view. 1744.
4. A *Reply*. 1744.
5. A *Defence* of the Answer to the Presbytery of Armagh's Appeal. 1745.

This is an account of a miserable local controversy, explained by Dr. Killen, *History*, vol. iii. ch. xxvii. p. 252.

#### 4. ANONYMOUS (1744).

*Some Queries* offered to the Consideration of the Rev. Mr. Thomas Nairn and his Admirers. 18mo, pp. 16. *Londonderry*, 1744.  
W. D. K.

This tract, of unknown authorship, addressed *ad vulgus*, proves that so early as 1744, the year after the Rev. John M'Millan, a deposed minister of the Church of Scotland, and the Rev. Thomas Nairn, previously a Seceding minister, had united to form the first Reformed Presbytery, popularly known as Covenanters. Mr. Nairn visited Ireland on an evangelistic tour, and excited some surprise among the ministers of the General Synod by preaching and baptizing over the country. The tract is intended to expose the extreme opinions of the new party, but in a literary point of view is contemptible. It is, so far as I know, the earliest existing product of the Derry press.

#### 5. ALEXANDER MACLAINE, M.A. (1735-1759), Minister at Ballynahinch and Antrim.

1. A *Sermon* preached at Antrim, December 18, 1745, being the National Fast. [Ps. cxii. 6-9.] pp. 24. *Dublin*, 1746.  
C. P. L.
2. A *Sermon*, occasioned by the death of the late Rev. Mr. John Henderson, preached at Duneean, January 7, 1753. [Job xxx. 23.] pp. 22. *Belfast*, 1753.  
A. C. B.

This minister, brother of the Rev. Archibald Maclaine of Banbridge, was ordained on the 18th of August, 1735, as successor to the Rev. James M'Alpin, who, after resigning his philosophy school at Killyleagh, acted as

pastor of Ballynahinch (1714-1732). When Duchal removed to Dublin, Maclaine succeeded him at Antrim, in 1742, in the Old Congregation. His fast-day sermon is a political homily, in which he shows the right of the House of Hanover against the Stuarts; but although it asserts the doctrine of a particular providence, it is colourless enough as to all other Gospel doctrines. He married a daughter of the celebrated Abernethy (see ch. xxv.), and one of his own daughters became the wife of his successor, the Rev. William Bryson. Mr. Maclaine died in 1759, and was buried at Antrim.

#### 6. CHARLES LYND (1708-1751), Minister at Coleraine.

*A Short and Plain Vindication* of several Scripture Principles, especially of the Conditionality of the Covenant of Grace, and that Faith is the primary and comprehensive condition thereof, in opposition to the Antinomian Principles of the Seceders; with Remarks on some public prints between the Seceders in Scotland, and an Address to those persons who admire and follow the Seceding Preachers. 1749.

Charles Lynd was of Huguenot extraction. His family settled at Rathmullan, and he himself, after studying at Edinburgh, became minister of Fannet on the 25th February, 1708. He was qualified to preach in Irish, but we do not know to what extent he used his talent. He became in 1728 the first minister of the Second Congregation of Coleraine. His tract, issued when the Seceders came to the district, I have never seen. He died on the 21st December, 1751. Dr. Reid speaks of him as an "experienced Christian and a most zealous minister."

#### 7. ROBERT PEEBLES (1758-1761), Minister at Loughgall.

*Against the Seceders.* 1750.

Dr. Clark of Cahans, writing in 1750, speaks of him with some contempt as "an ancient probationer" who had published a pamphlet against the Seceders, the real author of which, he hinted, was the Rev. James Orr of Loughgall. The pamphlet is now supposed to be lost.

Mr. Peebles was ordained as Mr. Orr's successor on the 26th of June, 1758, and, after a short ministry, died on the 31st of July, 1761.

8. JOHN THOMSON, Senior (1731-1765), Minister at Carnmoney.

An *Answer* to a Letter from a Gentleman in Ireland concerning the *Form of Marriage* used in the English Church. By a Minister of the Church of Scotland. pp. 23. *Dublin*, 1755.

This anonymous work is assigned to the older Thomson solely on the authority of Dr. Reid's MS. *Catalogue*. He was ordained at Carnmoney on the 14th of July, 1731, and died on the 18th of March, 1765.

9. A PRESBYTER OF IRELAND (1758).

*The Modes of Presbyterian Worship Vindicated* in a Letter to a Blacksmith. By a Presbyterian of Ireland. *London*, 1758. [Reprinted at *Dublin*, 1761 ; and at *Edinburgh*, 1826.]

A. C. P.

The *Letter* of the blacksmith, to which this pamphlet is a reply, was written by some Scottish Episcopalian under the sobriquet of a blacksmith, in order to disparage the forms of worship used in the Church of Scotland, and to make it appear that they are inferior in decency, order, and beauty to those in use among Episcopalians. To this production "A Presbyterian of Ireland" published a reply, in which he defends the practice of the Church of Scotland as to the public reading of the Scriptures, psalmody, the administration of the Supper, and extemporary prayer. Reid's MS. *Catalogue* assigns the authorship to the Rev. Robert Rentoul of Ballykelly (1773-1824). This I regard as a mistake. The edition of 1826, the only edition I have seen, professes to be a reprint of that of 1758. Mr. Rentoul died as recently as 1824. Few men survive their first attempt at authorship for sixty-six years. Besides, the pamphlet does not seem to be the production of a young author ; it is the fruit, apparently, of a mature



and thoughtful mind. The "Presbyter of Ireland" is, for the present, an unknown writer.

10. THOMAS VANCE (1747-1772), Minister at Ramelton and Dublin.

1. A *Thanksgiving Sermon* for the late Successes of His Majesty's Arms. Preached in Dublin, November 29, 1759. [Ps. cxviii. 15, 16 ; and dedicated to the Right Hon. William Pitt.] pp. 30. *Dublin*, 1760. M. C. D.
2. *Presbyterian Church Worship Vindicated*. A Sermon.

Thomas Vance was ordained at Ramelton, 18th August, 1747, but in 1755 removed to Usher's Quay, Dublin. He was father of the Rev. Patrick Vance, who in 1791 became minister of the Second Congregation, Belfast. He himself died, 1st June, 1772.

11. CHARLES MACCOLLUM (1745-1765), Minister at Loughbrickland and Dublin.

1. A *Sermon* preached at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. James Caldwell, in Usher's Quay Meetinghouse, the 16th of June, 1763. [1 Thess. v. 12, 13.] 12mo, pp. 30. *Dublin*, 1763. A. C. B.
2. A *New Version* of the Psalms. *Dublin*, 1765.

The author, a licentiate of Coleraine Presbytery, was ordained at Loughbrickland on the 6th of March, 1745, but removed before the end of the year to Capel Street Congregation, afterwards known as Mary's Abbey, Dublin. In 1760 he was Moderator of the Synod of Ulster. His sermon contains merely commonplace truths not very forcibly put. I have not seen his version of the Psalms. He demitted the charge of Capel Street Congregation on the 5th of May, 1765.

12. JOHN NELSON of Ballykelly (1762-1765).

1. A *Letter* to the Protestant Dissenters in the Parish of Ballykelly, occasioned by their Objections against their late Minister ; in which there is an attempt to show what regard is due to human Articles of Faith, and also to explain several

particulars relative to the Doctrine of Original Sin, Election, &c. Dated Dublin, July 4th, 1766. 2d edition issued at Belfast, 1770. pp. 150. *Belfast*, 1766. M. C. D.

2. A *Second Letter*.

Mr. Nelson was ordained in Ballykelly on the 5th of October, 1762. He signed the Confession; but as it soon appeared that his preaching ran counter to the creed he had signed, the instincts of a congregation at all times distinguished for orthodoxy took the alarm, and a prosecution was entered against him for teaching error. The Synod of Ulster at Lurgan, in 1764, with only one dissenting voice, decided that the charges against him were not proved. But the congregation, dissatisfied with the decision, took the law in their own hands, and made the minister's position so uncomfortable that he was obliged to resign in 1765. The letter named above, which he addressed to the people after his resignation, is at once the justification of the action of the congregation, and the condemnation of that of the Synod. He states in his epistle that the abstract language of catechisms and confessions is beyond the capacity of young people; explains away the passages of Scripture which teach original sin; denies the federal headship of Adam; asserts the Pelagian doctrine that children are born into the world without taint or tendency to evil; and casts ridicule on the doctrine of the fall of man. The letter is the product of a clear, cold, sceptical mind, and is saturated with error from beginning to end. It is merely a reproduction of the errors of Socinus, and of Dr. Taylor of Norwich. His subsequent history is unknown.

3. JAMES MACKAY (1732-1781), Minister at Bangor and Belfast.

1. *The Happiness of the Righteous in a Future State*, explained and improved. A Sermon preached in the Old Meeting-house in Belfast, February 28th, 1768, on occasion of the death of the late Reverend Mr. Thomas Drennan, Pastor of that Congregation, who departed this life February 14th, 1768. 12mo, pp. 32. *Belfast*, 1768. A. C. B.

2. *The Character and Future Reward* of the Wise and of those who turn many to Righteousness. A Sermon preached in the New Meetinghouse in Belfast, May 23, 1773, on occasion of the death of the late Reverend Mr. Gilbert Kennedy, Pastor of that Congregation, who departed this life May 12, 1773. 12mo, pp. 44. *Belfast*, 1773. A. C. B.

The author of these sermons was ordained minister of Bangor on the 15th November, 1732; but in 1756 he removed to Belfast, and became one of the pastors of the First Congregation. Dr. Bruce describes him as "a man of great simplicity and considerable learning." He died in 1781.

14. JOHN M'MAIN (1762-1777), Minister at Donagheady.

*A Translation of Ostervald's Dissertations.*

Mr. M'Main was ordained at Donagheady, 15th July, 1762, but was deposed on the 15th October, 1777. The sentence having been removed, he relapsed into sin, and finally was degraded in 1788.

15. JAMES HULL of Cookstown and Bangor (1752-1794).

*Religion Founded upon Knowledge*, and productive of Forbearance, Moderation, and Peace. A Sermon preached before a General Synod of Protestant Dissenting Ministers at their annual meeting in Dungannon, June 26th, 1770, and published at their request. [Rom. xiv. 22.] 12mo, pp. 36. *Belfast*, 1770. A. C. B.

Mr. Hull was ordained at Cookstown on the 5th of August, 1752, but after a ten years' ministry he removed to Bangor in 1763. He was Moderator of the Synod of Ulster in 1769. The style of his Synodical sermon, named above, is clear and manly, but his doctrine does not rise above a cold morality. It is New Light divinity throughout; conscience, not Scripture, is to be every man's guide; diversity of opinion is not an evil; the evil is when men force their opinions on others, and persecute those who will not receive them; let every man believe what he likes, and let all live agreeably together. This is the tone of the discourse.

There seems in the author's religious system little or no place for the work of Christ, or the work of the Holy Spirit. He demitted the charge of Bangor on the 21st of May, 1793, and died in March the next year.

16. WILLIAM JAMES, Minister at Bready (Reformed Presbyterian).

*Homesius Enervatus*: a Letter addressed to Mr. John Holmes, containing (1.) An Essay on Church Communion; (2.) The Terms of Church Communion held by the Reformed Presbytery vindicated; (3.) Grounds of Separation from the Synod of Ireland; and (4.) Animadversions upon a Pamphlet entitled "*A Testimony*," &c., written by Mr. Holmes, Minister at Glendermot. 12mo, pp. 92. Londonderry, 1772. A. C. B.

The Rev. William James, author of this rare pamphlet, became minister of Bready, near Derry, about 1764, and is the first in connection with the Reformed Presbytery in Ireland who appears as a writer. Beyond the controversy with Mr. Holmes on the terms of Church communion, which the title of the pamphlet announces, I have found out no particulars of his life.

17. SAMUEL MOORE (1766-1804), Minister at Killeag.

*The Criterion*; or, The Nature of Christian Communion Explained, and some Consequences thereof Considered, in a Familiar Letter from a Dissenting Gentleman to his Friend. 12mo, pp. 106. Belfast, 1772.

The writer of this work was the second son of Patrick Moore of Ballysallagh, near Bangor, and was born on the 5th of May, 1742. He became the first minister of Killeag, a Secession church formed on the confines of the parishes of Aghadoey and Macosquin, and which acquired some distinction under the ministry of his successor, the Rev. James Bryce. His *Criterion* is a very rare pamphlet, of which, after much search, I have never discovered a copy. The inscription on his tomb in the churchyard of Aghadowey describes him as "honest in the world, faithful in office, and pious

towards his God." A grand-niece of Mr. Moore is married to the Rev. William McIlwrath of Newtownards.

18. WILLIAM STAVELY, Minister at Ann's Borough, near Belfast.

1. *Truth Restored*, or the New Mode of Swearing Religious Oaths by Touching and Kissing a Book examined. *Newry*, 1775.
2. *War Proclaimed and Victory Ensured*; or the Lamb's Conquests illustrated. [Rev. xvii. 14.] 8vo, pp. 66. *Belfast*, 1795. M. C. D.

The writer of these pamphlets was one of the founders of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the second of that body who committed any of his productions to the press. "He was," says *The Covenanter* of January 1865, "a remarkable man in his day, known, respected, and honoured throughout the whole province of Ulster as a zealous and indefatigable preacher of a pure Gospel, at a period when vital godliness was at a low ebb." Mr. Stavely was grand-uncle to Rev. J. N. McLeod of New York, and father to the late Rev. Dr. W. J. Stavely of Dervock, a venerable man and an excellent Christian minister.

19. WILLIAM BLAKELY (1770-1779), Minister at Carrickfergus.

*The Nature and Foundation of Civil Government*, and Duty of Subjects. A Sermon from Rom. xiii. 1-3, preached in Carrickfergus on December 13, 1776, being the Fast Day appointed by Government. pp. 23. *Belfast*, 1777.

The writer of this sermon was ordained at Carrickfergus on the 12th of December, 1770; but was deposed for intemperance on the 2d of December, 1779.

20. JOHN BAIRD, D.D. (1767-1777), Minister at Dublin.

*Dissertations, Chronological, Historical, and Critical*, of all the Books of the Old Testament; through which are interspersed Reflections, Theological and Moral, arising from the various Subjects. Vol. i. pp. 531. *Dublin*, 1778. M. C. D.



The writer came from the Isle of Man, and was ordained as minister of the congregation of Capel Street (Mary's Abbey), on the 11th of January, 1767. He did not live in harmony with his people, and was obliged to resign, after a ministry of ten years. His *Dissertations*, dated from "Mary's Abbey, November 12th, 1777," was published soon after his resignation. Its chapters were originally lectures delivered to the congregation, but before publication they received material additions at his hand. The work shows reading and thought, but contains little which would now be regarded as of much value. He had intended to go through the Old Testament in the same way; but his performance fell short of his intentions, for the only volume published ends with Exodus, chap. xx. The world has not lost much by this failure. The taste and judgment of the author may be estimated from the statement of the preface, that these discourses were "delivered to a certain sort of people, whose temper and behaviour in general must necessarily render it very uncomfortable and dangerous to preside over them in religious affairs." We are not now in a position to judge who was in fault; but it is possible to conjecture, when we remember that his successor, Dr. M'Dowell, found on his arrival in Dublin that the congregation was reduced to six families and a few individuals, and that under his ministry it grew to be a flourishing church, over which he presided in honour for forty-seven years.

Dr. Baird dedicated his *Dissertations* to the Bishop of Down, in terms much too sycophantic to be becoming in a man who had the honour of being a Presbyterian minister, and suggestive that the writer expected his flattery to be rewarded. So far as known, the Bishop, to his credit, took no notice either of the book or the man. The step to which the dedication was preliminary was taken soon after. Dr. Baird joined the Establishment, and reaped his reward in the small benefice of Cloghran. He died in 1804.

## 21. HUGH DELAP (1751-1787), Minister of Omagh.

*An Inquiry* whether and how far Magistracy is of Divine Appointment, and of the subjection due thereunto. A Sermon preached in the Old-Bridge Meetinghouse near Omagh, the 14th of November, 1779, before the Omagh and Cappagh Volunteers. 4to, pp. 23. *Strabane*, 1779. A. C. B.

The writer of this discourse was ordained minister of Omagh on the 5th of June, 1751. An act of immorality, from which he did not clear himself to the satisfaction of all his congregation, was the cause of a number of the people withdrawing from his ministry and forming a second congregation, which was recognised by the Synod in 1752. Mr. Delap died on the 12th of June, 1787, and was succeeded in his congregation by his son and namesake.

## 22. JAMES STOUPPE, M.A. (1769-1780), Minister at Enniskillen and Dunmurry.

*The Uncertainty of Life*. A Sermon delivered at Lisburn, April 18, 1779, occasioned by the death of the Rev. George Kennedy, M.A., late Pastor of the Protestant Dissenting Congregation of that place, and published at their desire. [James iv. 14.] 12mo, pp. 32. *Belfast*, 1779. A. C. B.

Mr. Stouppe was licensed at Lurgan by the Presbytery of Bangor on the 28th of June, 1768. He succeeded the Rev. Thomas Plunket, father of Lord Chancellor Plunket, as minister of Enniskillen on the 29th of November, 1769. Two years after, he received two calls, one to Greyabbey and one to Dunmurry. He accepted the latter, and was installed there on the 3d of June, 1772. The untimely death of his neighbour, Mr. Kennedy of Lisburn, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, elicited much sympathy from his people, and at their request Mr. Stouppe published the eloquent funeral sermon which he preached on the occasion. He resigned in 1780. Dr. Montgomery afterwards said (*Irish Unitarian Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 399), that he himself was the fifth minister who preached New Light doctrine in Dunmurry. If this was so, Mr. Stouppe must have been the first of the five, and in his person the new opinions first entered the pulpit, from which.

in older and better days, good old John Malcolm (see ch. xxviii.) had lifted up a loud protest against non-subscription and heresy.

23. WILLIAM NEVIN (1748-1780), Minister at Downpatrick.

*The Nature and Evidence of an Overruling Providence Considered.*

A Sermon preached before the Downe Volunteers and Fusiliers on the 5th of September, 1779, and published at their desire. [Ps. cxxiv. 8.] 12mo, pp. 32. *Belfast*, 1779.

A. C. B.

When his father, Rev. Thomas Nevin of Downpatrick (see ch. xxxviii.), died, William had almost completed his medical studies at the University; but the congregation persuaded him to study theology, and, when his course was finished, called him to occupy his father's place. He was ordained in 1748. He acted as minister and medical adviser to the people, and as he took no fee, and was, moreover, a "cautious, safe, and skilful practitioner," he must have had practice in abundance. He was endowed with a great power of reasoning on abstract subjects, and had the gift of expressing much in few words. He aided in establishing the Widows' Fund. His life was shortened by a fall from his horse. He died a few years after, in November, 1780. His sermon is a fair exposition of the doctrine of Divine providence, but it is as barren of evangelical sentiments as the other Volunteer sermons of the time. The facts now stated are derived from the *Funeral Sermon* preached for him by Sinclair of Larne.

24. ANDREW FERGUSON, JUN. (1725-1787), Minister at Burt.

*Sermon* preached before the Volunteers.

Mr. Ferguson was ordained at Burt, as successor to his father, on the 16th of February, 1725. I have not seen a copy of his Volunteer sermon. He died on the 31st January, 1787. His grandson was made a baronet in 1801. His great grandson, Sir Robert A. Ferguson, was for many years M.P. for the city of Derry in the Liberal interest, and a statue to his memory stands in the Diamond.

## 25. JAMES CARMICHAEL, Minister at Donacloney.

*The Protestant Volunteer Characterised*, and the warrantableness and necessity of his appearing in arms stated and illustrated, from Judges v. 2-9. A Sermon preached, December 21, 1779, at Donacloney, to the Volunteers of that Congregation. [Dedicated to Sir Richard Johnston, Bart.] 12mo, pp. 48. Newry, 1780. A. C. B.

Mr. Carmichael was a native of Saintfield, and was ordained at Donacloney in 1770. Rev. G. H. Shanks of Boardmills is his grandson.

## 26. SAMUEL LIVINGSTON (1765-1802), Minister at Clare.

*The Obligation Men are under to exert themselves for the Defence of their Country.* A Sermon preached before the Clare Volunteers on the 9th of January, 1780. [1 Chron. xix. 13.] 8vo, pp. 32. Newry, 1780. A. C. B.

Mr. Livingston succeeded Mr. Cherry (see No. 1 of this chapter) on the 20th of August, 1765, and died on the 26th of February, 1802.

## 27. SAMUEL SLOANE (1780-1793), Minister at Markethill.

*Sermon* occasioned by the death of the late Rev. George Ferguson, preached at Markethill, June 23, 1782. [Job xiv. 14.] pp. 31. Newry, 1782. A. C. B.

Mr. Sloane was ordained at Markethill on the 13th of June, 1780. His *Funeral Sermon* for Ferguson is the ornate production of a young man. Dr. Clark of Cahans charges him with never praying for the pardon of original sin when administering baptism; but this charge must be taken with some allowance. He died on the 15th of March, 1793.

## 28. WILLIAM WILSON (1765-1807), Minister at Magherafelt and Dublin.

*The Christian's Consolation* in the hope set before him. [Heb. vi. 18.] A Sermon preached at Lurgan before the Rev. General Synod of Ulster on the second day of their meeting. pp. 32. Belfast, 1783.

Mr. Wilson was ordained as minister of Magherafelt on the 19th November, 1765. He was Moderator of

the Synod of Ulster in 1783, and preached a sermon on the second day of its meeting that year at Lurgan. He removed to Usher's Quay, Dublin, where he was installed on the 9th of April, 1785. He died in that charge, 9th June, 1807. His son, Rev. James Wilson, D.D., was a Fellow and Professor of Trinity College, Dublin, and became Rector of Clonfeacle in County Tyrone.

29. PHILIP TAYLOR of Dublin (1777— ).

1. A *Sermon* on the death of the Rev. S. Thomas of Eustace Street. 1786.
2. A *Catechism*.

He was a grandson of Dr. Taylor of Norwich, and a pupil of Dr. Priestley. He succeeded his father-in-law, Dr. Weld of Eustace Street, in 1777.

30. THOMAS M'KAY M.A. (1788–1822), Minister at Brigh.

1. *Six Addresses* proper for Sacramental Occasions. pp. 36. Belfast, 1786.
2. A *Sermon* from Psalm cxii. 6, preached at Bray before the Orangemen of Killyman, Cookstown, Pomeroy, and Coagh Districts, on the 1st of July, O.S. 8vo, pp. 22. *Dungan-*  
*non*, 1799. M. C. D.

Mr. M'Kay was ordained minister of Ballyclug, afterwards called Brigh, on the 1st of August, 1788. I have not seen his *Sacramental Addresses*, and cannot say why they are set down for 1786, two years before his ordination; but I suspect there must be some mistake as to the date. He was father of the Rev. William Kennedy M'Kay of Portglenone. He died on the 19th of December, 1822.

31. MOSES NEILSON, D.D. (1767–1823), Minister at  
Kilmore, County Down.

Whether the *Light of Nature* be sufficient to Salvation; considered in a Discourse delivered at Lurgan, June 26, 1787, at a General Synod of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers of Ulster. [1 Cor. i. 21.] 12mo, pp. 26. Belfast, 1788. A. C. B.

Dr. Neilson became minister of Kilmore in 1767. His sermon before the Synod in 1787 on the *Light of*



*Nature* is the production of a Christian philosopher. He died on the 23d of April, 1823.

32. JOSEPH HUTTON of Dublin (1788- ).

1. *A Volunteer Sermon.*
2. *Family Prayers.*
3. *Character, Duties, and Privileges of the Christian*, 1829.

He was a native of Dublin, studied at Trinity College, and was ordained in Eustace Street, 21st March, 1788.

33. HUGH HAMILL (1784-1803), Minister at Donagheady.

*Ministerial Responsibility*; considered in a Sermon preached before the Rev. Sub-Synod of Derry, May 8, 1787. pp. 35. *Strabane*, 1788.

Mr. Hamill was ordained at Donagheady on the 4th of March, 1784, and died on the 7th of December, 1803.

34. WILLIAM TAGGART, M.A. (1788-1805), Minister at Dunmurry.

*Sermons* [12 in one vol.] pp. 268. *Strabane*, 1788. A. C. B.

Mr. Taggart succeeded Rev. Robert Jackson of Dunmurry, who died 5th of September, 1788. He probably was minister previously of some congregation in the north-west, for in the year Mr. Jackson died he published a volume of sermons printed at Strabane. The discourses are not so dry as most of the New Light sermons, but I have searched them in vain to find any decisive testimony to the Deity or to the atonement of Christ. He does not deny the pre-eminence and dignity of the Redeemer, but it is the human side of Gospel truth which has most attractions for him, and on which he dwells at length.

When Mr. Taggart settled at Dunmurry he carried over the congregation, which was one of the oldest in connection with the Synod of Ulster, into the Presbytery of Antrim. On the 14th of May, 1805, the Presbytery disannexed him from the charge, whereupon the congregation returned to the Synod.

## 35. WILLIAM LAING, V.D.M., Newry (1780-1816).

*Philemon's Letters to Onesimus* on the subject of Christ's Atonement and Divinity. 8vo, pp. 432. Newry, 1791. M. C. D.

Mr. Laing was the first minister of the Secession Congregation of Newry (now Second Newry), from 1780 till 1816. He died on the 22d of July in that year. His only publication, *Philemon's Letters*, sixteen in number, fill a bulky volume. They answer, from the standpoint of orthodoxy, all the popular objections offered against the atonement and divinity of Christ, and point out the solid basis of Scriptural evidence on which these doctrines rest. The style is lucid, the arguments well thought out, and the spirit is Christian more than controversial. The reader, whether he attach weight to the reasoning or otherwise, cannot well take offence at a writer who traverses the whole ground of debate with so much seriousness and good temper. These admirable *Letters* must have done much in their day to keep the Secession right at a time when heresy was in the air.

## 36. JAMES M'KINNEY of Dervock (1793).

*View of the Rights of God and Man.* [Matt. xxii. 21.]

Mr. M'Kinney was a native of County Derry, educated at Glasgow, and for some time settled as Reformed Presbyterian minister at Dervock. In 1793 he removed to America, and spent the last years of his life in forming Covenanting congregations in the States of Pennsylvania and New York. The well-known Dr. Alexander M'Leod was converted under his ministry. His only literary remains are the above-named discourse, and a pamphlet on the Perseverance of the Saints. A second edition of the former was published in America in 1833. The author died on the 16th of September 1802. A notice of M'Kinney, with extracts

from the sermon, and a copy of his epitaph, are to be found in the *Covenanter* (See Nos. for May 1831 and January 1862).

37. JAMES PATTERSON, M.A., of Ballee (1782-1798).

*The Right of Kings and the Duties of Subjects* explained and enforced from the Sacred Scripture. [Matt. xii. 25.] pp. 20. Belfast, 1793. M. C. D.

The author of this sermon was ordained at Ballee, 28th October, 1782. The design of his sermon is to point out, on the authority of Scripture, what are reasonable grounds for public discontent, and, when such grounds exist, to show the proper means that ought to be used for preventing the evil consequences. He applies the subject to the state of public affairs existing at the time. It is a sensible and judicious discourse, intended to moderate the keen political feeling of the time, and to warn the people against the movement which resulted in the rebellion of 1798. The author died on the 7th of May, about a month before the movement—in regard to which he had given such faithful warning—entirely collapsed, involving many people, innocent and guilty alike, in very serious sufferings.

38. JOHN ABERNETHY of Ballywillan and Templepatrick (1769-1802).

*Philalethes*; or, Revelation consistent with Reason: an attempt to answer the objections and arguments against it in Mr. Paine's work entitled *The Age of Reason*. 8vo, pp. 60. Belfast, 1795. A. C. B.

Mr. John Abernethy, a licentiate of Templepatrick Presbytery, was ordained at Ballywillan, as successor to Mr. Gaston, on the 15th of August, 1769. In 1774 he removed to Templepatrick, where he was installed on the 12th of August. He published his *Philalethes* in reply to Paine in 1795, in which he shows that nothing said by that clever sceptic impairs the argu-

ments for Divine revelation founded on miracles and prophecy. He deals only with the external evidences, and manifests but a moderate acquaintance with the peculiarities of the Gospel salvation. He was so economical in his habits, that he wrote the whole pamphlet on the backs of letters, to avoid the expense of buying paper. He resigned his charge on the 2d January, 1796, but as he continued afterwards, in spite of remonstrance, to celebrate marriages contrary to the rules of the Synod, he was deposed on the 4th of May, 1802. In a poem, written by one Moat of Ballyclare, and published in 1820, the faults and eccentricities of Mr. Abernethy are not spared; he is described as fond of money, addicted to manual labour, able in argument, and acquainted with various branches of science. Its notice of him ends thus :

“ He was a bright and luminous preacher,  
A sound and honest moral teacher,  
A subtle abstract metaphysician,  
A shrewd and able politician ;  
In controversy few came near him,  
It was delightful for to hear him ;  
His logic made the clubs to fear him :  
He knew the system of creation  
Better than most men in the nation :  
For few were found so very pithy  
As was old learned Abernethy.”

### 39. JOSIAS WILSON of Donegore, County Antrim.

*The Guilt and Danger of the Nation.* A Sermon from Jeremiah v. 29 ; humbly inscribed to the People of Ireland. 12mo, pp. 34. *Belfast*, 1796. A. C. B.

The author was minister of the Secession congregation at Donegore in the end of last century. His fast-day sermon, entitled as above, was in its subject well adapted to the occasion, but does not contain anything very striking. He discusses the sins of nations, the reasons why God punishes them, and the manner in which He punishes them. To the sermon he adds an

appendix, in which he gives certain prophecies by Fleming, Love, and Richard Brothers, the last of which has been long since falsified.

#### 40. JOHN NICHOLSON of Belfast (1784-1816).

1. *A Lecture and Sermon*. [Acts xxiii. 12-16, and 2 Cor. v. 11.] pp. 31. *Belfast*, 1799. A. C. B.
2. *Letters on the Extensive Jurisdiction of Presbyterian Churches, and on the failure of the late Overtures for a coalescence between the two Synods of Seceders in Ireland*. Addressed to the Rev. John Rogers, M.A. 12mo, pp. 104. *Belfast*, 1810. M. C. D.

Mr. Nicholson was a Scotchman, born in 1761, and ordained at Larne about 1784, the first minister of the Secession congregation there. He taught a classical school at Blackcave, and had for one of his pupils Dr. M'Henry, the well-known poet and novelist, and Rev. George Hay, afterwards of Derry. He was installed in Berry Street, Belfast, on 20th August, 1799. Here he had for a pupil Rev. John Barnett, D.D., of Money-more, and was one of the founders of the Brown Street Sunday-School. He died of fever, March 10, 1814. He was, says Mr. Porter of Larne, to whom I am indebted for this information, "a liberal-minded and accomplished man, an excellent Hebraist, and a first-rate classical scholar." (See *Larne Reporter*, June 27, 1874.)

#### 41. JAMES CUMING of Ahoghill (1760-1809).

*The Apostle Paul's Reasoning* before Felix ascertained and applied. A Sermon preached at Ballymoney, November 12, 1800, on occasion of the ordination of the Rev. Benjamin Mitchell in that place. pp. 28. *Belfast*, 1800.

Mr. Cuming was ordained at Ahoghill on the 14th of October, 1760. His ordination sermon, preached at Ballymoney, is understood to be his only publication. He died on the 3d March, 1809. He was grand-uncle of the late Professor Gibson, D.D., of Belfast.



## 42. ANDREW MILLAR of Clogher (1773-1831).

*Some Observations on the Practice of Sacrificing* in general, with an application of them to the great sacrifice of Christ; being a Sermon preached in Lurgan on the 24th of June, 1800, at the opening of the General Synod of Ulster. [Heb. ix. 26.] 12mo, pp. 46. Dublin, 1800. A. C. B.

The author of this discourse was originally a licentiate of the Letterkenny Presbytery, who was ordained as minister of Clogher on the 15th of June, 1773. In 1799 he acted as Moderator of the Synod of Ulster at Lurgan. The meeting of that year spent a portion of its time in ascertaining how far any of its members had connection with the recent rebellion, and it was found that much fewer of its members were implicated than was generally supposed. This seems to have been the only meeting of Synod attended by the Rev. Alexander Carson of Tubbermore, who afterwards withdrew from the Presbyterian Church, and obtained celebrity as an able polemic in connection with the Baptists. Mr. Millar, on retiring from office, preached his sermon on sacrifice, in which he sets forth with ability the atonement of Christ, and shows how it was prefigured in the sacrifices of the Old Testament. He died on the 11th of February, 1831, in the eighty-seventh year of his age. We append an extract.

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 THE GREAT SACRIFICE.

We stand on sacred ground. Our most devout attention is arrested by the most awful, the most astonishing object, that ever was displayed to the view of the world—THE CROSS OF CHRIST. We behold the Son of God offering that one great sacrifice which effectually completes the end of all that, by Divine appointment, had gone before, and supersedes the necessity of every other. We cannot pretend to fathom all the depths of Divine Wisdom in this amazing appointment. Angels look into it with superior, though still with limited success. Let us improve its blessings, and we may look forward to a period when we will also view it like angels.—*Practice of Sacrificing*, p. 30.

## CONCLUSION.

THE history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, from the accession of the House of Stuart down till the period of Disestablishment, may be divided into three periods, of nearly a century each. The first of these, covering the seventeenth century, is the period in which Presbyterianism first appears, and, in spite of persecution and opposition, secures for itself a footing in the country: the second, coinciding with the eighteenth century, is a time of religious declension—declension in doctrinal purity, in zeal, and in usefulness: the third, or nineteenth century, is a period of revival and recovery, characterised by growth in orthodoxy, in activity, and in every symptom of spiritual life. It is only the first and second of these periods which are illustrated in these volumes. The thoughtful reader who travels carefully over the ground to which he has been introduced here, can scarcely fail to observe, as he passes along, the evidence furnished in support of the following facts:—

1. That during the whole of the seventeenth century, there was no discernible taint of false doctrine in the teaching of the ministers whom we regard as the fathers and founders of the Church. Most of them were ministers or licentiates of the Church of Scotland, who brought with them here the doctrine, worship, and ecclesiastical government that John Knox had planted, and which the Stuarts were attempting to drive out of their native country; and their ambition was to sow in Ireland the good seed which had already taken root in Scottish soil. In Blair of Bangor, or in Patrick Adair of Cairncastle, in John Livingstone, or in Michael Bruce

of Killinchy, one would have as much difficulty in finding a single speck of heresy as in Andrew Melville or in George Gillespie, in John Calvin or in Martin Luther.

2. Those who were licensed or ordained in Scotland had already accepted the formularies of the Scottish Church — the Scots Confession, or the Westminster Confession after its adoption; and when they came over to Ireland they were not required to accept it again. Others, like Francis Iredell (see ch. xvii.), who were educated at home, were publicly called upon at their ordination to assent to the Westminster Confession; but such cases were so few, that the officiating ministers appear to have acted from their own sense of what was right in requiring the candidate to give the people some satisfactory evidence of his soundness in the faith, rather than from obedience to any ecclesiastical law then in existence. It is quite certain that subscription was not at that time essential to entrance into the ministry; and the probability is, that if error had not made its appearance, subscription would never have been required. Creeds do not create error: it is the existence of error that produces creeds. If there is no danger, men never think of precautions. Creeds only come into existence when danger, arising from error, is at the door.

3. The first thing that produced the alarm was the astounding fact, then just discovered, that Thomas Emlyn (see ch. xv.) had been preaching in Dublin for ten or eleven years, and yet during that time did not hold the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ. In 1702 the Arianism of Emlyn was detected, and he ceased to be pastor of Wood Street Congregation. In 1703, he was tried in the civil courts and condemned to imprisonment. It was full time to take precautions. What had occurred already in Dublin might at any time occur in the North. The Synod of 1705 agreed unanimously that all already licensed should subscribe the Westminster Confession prior to their ordination, and that all candidates in future should subscribe

before being licensed. To that resolution the whole Synod agreed unanimously: all who joined the Synod subsequently entered under that rule, and of course united themselves to a subscribing body. Any man who did not approve of this principle, it is quite manifest, ought not to have sought ordination in the Presbyterian Church; but having sought ordination in a subscribing body, he should loyally have adhered to its principles, or if he discovered that its principles did not suit him, he should have voluntarily withdrawn. However this may be, it is clear enough that it was the appearance of serious error in one minister that prompted the Church to adopt the practice of requiring subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the best means that they could think of for securing that the future ministers of the Church should be sound in the faith. If they could have thought of any better means of attaining the grand object in view, they were not so wedded to subscription as to choose it in preference to the better plan. But they chose subscription as on the whole the best means for effecting the purpose, and after the experience of one hundred and seventy years, we cannot say that they were wrong.

4. Heresy or religious error is the device of Satan for corrupting the truth of God and destroying its effects upon the opinions, feelings, conduct, character, and eternal destinies of men. The evil heart is the engine through which the unseen enemy works; but there are, of course, outward instrumentalities by which error recommends itself to the minds and hearts of men, so as eventually to have the will, the conviction, and even the misguided conscience, upon its side. One of the most potent of these instrumentalities in the case of the Presbyterian ministers of Ireland was the defective and erroneous teaching of the Universities. It was specially from the University of Glasgow that the Presbyterian clergy, with few exceptions, derived their philosophical and theological training. Simson and Leechman, and I fear I must add Hutcheson too, corrupted the fountains of knowledge, and Scotland, as one may gather from

the Socinianism of the Ayrshire ministers in the time of Burns, but especially Ireland, suffered from the evil effects. No Church can possibly keep herself orthodox and pure, that resigns all oversight and control of the seminaries in which the future occupants of her pulpits are instructed. Heresy in the pulpit may slay her thousands, but heresy from the rostrum slays its tens of thousands. A Church tied by circumstances or by other bonds to a university, as ours at the time was tied virtually to the University of Glasgow, is at the mercy of the men whom design or accident may place in its chairs; and when these happen to be sceptics or rationalists, the Church cannot miss being the victim.

5. The rationalistic spirit in the Church showed itself very gradually. It commenced with opposition to the practice of requiring subscription to an uninspired creed from those entering the ministry; then it showed itself in opposition to the authority of the subordinate courts when they enforced the law, and consequently in opposition to Church government in every form; and this on the part of men who made a high profession of their faith in the Deity of Christ and in other fundamental doctrines of the Christian system. But the rationalistic germ developed in due time, and in one or two generations the ecclesiastical descendants of the original Non-subscribers did not hesitate to omit from their public instruction such doctrines as the depravity of human nature, a vicarious atonement, and the Deity of the Son of God; while others, more bold and honest, did not hesitate to deny them openly. Error is like an inclined plane. Once let a man trust himself upon it, and the natural tendency is to slide down lower and lower. The principles of Dr. Colville, as shown in his *Queries*, or of John Cameron in his *Doctrine of Holy Scripture concerning the One True God*, were a deep descent from the opinions of Dr. James Kirkpatrick or the doctrines avowed even by Samuel Haliday. Is there not a still lower depth? May not some reach it even in this nineteenth century?

6. The Belfast Society formed a training school in



which a number of ministers habituated themselves to think, to express their thoughts in writing and in speech, to argue, and reply to argument, so that when the struggle came they were able to sustain their opinions with more effect than their orthodox opponents. Hence the latter were forced to depend more on the number of their votes than on their theological knowledge and controversial skill. This shows the importance of ministers cultivating habits of reading and thought, and of expressing thought readily both in written and spoken language, and of maintaining such a practice through life. A day may come when all the gifts and attainments that we can bring into use may be needed by the Church, and the cause of Christ may suffer for our want of them.

7. The plan adopted by the majority, of collecting all the avowed Non-Subscribers into one Presbytery, and then of withdrawing from ecclesiastical communion with them, as was done in 1726, was wise and effective. It put a decided check on their power of propagating their doctrine; it left them little room to draw upon popular sympathies, by raising the cry that they were persecuted; and it gave the orthodox ministers the opportunity of withdrawing, if they chose, from all association with them. But the fact is, that many members of the Synod did not choose to embrace the opportunity. Some of them regretted the disruption of the body, and dreamed of a reunion to be produced, not by the Non-Subscribers coming up to the principles of the Synod, but by the members of the Synod descending to the level of the Non-Subscribers. Those who had fought the battle of orthodoxy, being most of them old men, soon died out; young men with the principles of Simson and Leechman were constantly coming in. A reaction followed. The New Light men grew to be the majority, and when Benjamin M'Dowell began to preach up orthodoxy down at Ballykelly, old men shook their heads and thought it presumptuous in that rash young man thus to take it on him to set up his judgment in opposition to the great

lights of the Synod. Thus it was that for sixty years after the separation of the Presbytery of Antrim, the Church went from bad to worse, until in the end the Presbytery of Antrim was perhaps as orthodox as the Synod which cast it out.

8. The growing indifference to orthodoxy in the General Synod soon showed itself by the lax formula of subscription adopted in some of the Presbyteries. The formula which Dr. Stephenson refused to sign at Greyabbey might have been signed by any intelligent Jew, Turk, or Pagan, who had taken the trouble first of reading the Bible and afterwards the Confession. The form of subscription was kept up that the confidence of the people might be retained; a lax form was kept up, to enable a man to enter the ministry, by signing a confession of which he believed only as much as he pleased. Immense evil was done by maintaining a form of subscription, the only use of which was to lull to sleep the suspicions of the people, while in reality it bound to nothing those who publicly affixed their names to it. The whole thing was a mischievous farce. Dr. Stephenson rendered a public service to the cause of honesty and morality, by contemptuously spitting upon the whole thing in the very face of the Church. The Church never fell so low, nor became so degraded and useless, as in those days of merely nominal subscription.

9. The advent of the Seceding ministers was a blessing to many poor souls hungering for the Gospel, and unable perhaps to find it in the congregations to which they belonged. The strangers benefited many of the best disposed and most religious of the Ulster people, whom they gathered into communities and organised into churches; but they did not benefit the ministers of the Synod in an equal degree. They took advantage of every opening which presented itself, and made their evangelical raids into the territories of orthodox ministers as well as of the New Lights; and thus the whole Synod was forced by circumstances into an attitude of resistance. But the Secession held its own. Divine

Providence had a work for it to do in Ulster. It was sent to gather out the dissatisfied elements from the congregations of the Synod and preserve them in the enjoyment of the pure Gospel, till the incubus of error had been shaken off and the hour for restoration came. At the very time when the religious gloom was thickest in the Synod, the light of the Gospel burned brightly on the Secession altar.

10. To check the growth of the Secession would not have been for the public advantage; but if it had, the ministers of the Synod did not take the most judicious and effective plan. It was not to be done by Synodical warnings, pulpit denunciations, controversy, persecution, or expressed contempt. No good cause was ever extinguished by such expedients. That result could only have been effected by a method that many of the Synod's ministers were not in circumstances to take, namely, to out-preach, to out-pray, and out-work them. Had that course been taken, the Seceders either would not have come, or, had they come, they would not have prospered. Had that been always done, Ireland never would have needed Seceders. But New Light was unfruitful of spiritual good and impotent for spiritual purposes. The only thing it could do was to ignore the Seceders and to wait; and that is exactly what it did, and did with some effect.

11. Error of doctrine and immorality of conduct do not necessarily go together. In daily life we constantly meet them dissociated; immoral men may be faultless in the orthodoxy that they profess, and a man of unsound opinions may be virtuous and amiable. This is not to be forgotten. Without meaning to insinuate that the two qualities in question always, or even often, produce each other, we do not hesitate to say that where either error or immorality is found in a professing Christian, it is calculated to do serious injury to true religion and to the Church, which is simply the Divine instrument for spreading true religion and for keeping it alive. Error is more natural to the human heart than truth, and consequently it is much more easy to take up

error than to get free of it. Immorality of life makes men cold to a system of religion which constantly frowns upon vice and condemns it. Either tends to detach men from the society of the faithful and good. Thus detached, they seek out and find people like themselves; they fall in with worldly men and with worldly notions; they frequent places that are patronised by the world, and they are usually lost to the Church. How seldom is it that the sceptic, cast out for his errors, or that the fallen, cast out for his sins, repents of his mistake, and finds his way back to the society out of which he was shut once upon a time. Thousands have been lost to Presbyterianism in this way. But, after all, that is a small matter. The real misfortune is that such persons themselves lose in most instances something far more precious even than Presbyterianism; they make shipwreck of the faith of the Gospel. It is, indeed, a serious calamity when any human soul is lost to holiness, and to truth, and to God.

12. All things considered, subscription to a creed is not absolutely essential to the existence of a Church. It is only when error shows itself that subscription to some well-prepared form of sound words, or some other wise expedient to secure the doctrinal orthodoxy of Church teachers, becomes necessary. The Westminster Confession is the creed that is most frequently used, by Presbyterians who speak the English language, for securing this end. Other creeds are in use by other Churches, and by Presbyterian Churches on the Continent; but most of us believe that the Westminster formulary is, on the whole, best adapted to our country and our circumstances. It contains the substance of all that is true in the three ancient creeds, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. Its doctrinal system is in harmony with the creeds and confessions of all the best Reformed Churches. The Church may in future times revise, shorten, or even lengthen it if necessary; but all our past experience as a Church in this country goes for nothing if it is not clear to demonstration, that the practice of requiring from all ministers subscription

to it, or to some other confession substantially identical therewith, is essential to our orthodoxy, to our prosperity, and to our usefulness in the world. It may be no more than a human expedient, but it is an expedient which the history of two centuries shows to be wise and effective, and burdensome to none except to those with whose services in the pulpit and in the parish the Church can very well afford to dispense.





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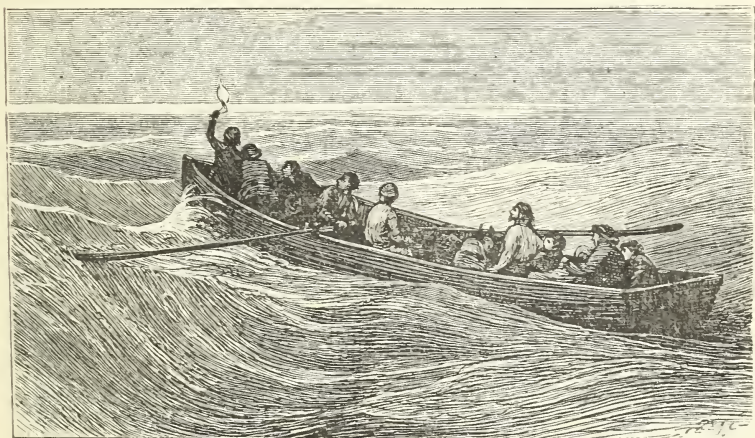
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